TWO

DIALOGUES

BETWEEN

Patru and *D'Ablancourt*

CONCERNING

PLEASURES.

Translated from the FRENCH by a Young LADY.

LONDON:
Printed by JAMES BETTENHAM. 1730.

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BRITISH MUSEUM

LONDON:
Printed by JAMES BETTENHAM. 1710.

To the Right Honourable the

Countess of GRANDISON.

MADAM,

THESE few Sheets were translated from the *French* by a young Lady, who, I'm afraid, will be reckon'd unfashionable, for having employ'd some of those leisure hours in that way of amusement in her closet, which the more polite part of her sex spend in the publick diversions of the

town. It was much againſt her inclination to have them printed, but at laſt being prevailed upon, by the importunity of her neareſt Friend, to conſent to it, ſhe with her own hand corrected the preſs; and after having been at all the charges, made a preſent of the copies to me, with a ſtrict injunction never to diſcover by whom they were tranſlated, nor to expoſe them in the Bookſellers ſhops, but to make what advantage I could by diſtributing them amongſt my friends.

Upon

Upon reading them over, I could plainly diſcern your Ladyſhip's character fully deſcribed and delineated by the Proteſtant Diſputant, your exemplary conduct being ſo exactly conformable to his ſentiments; for your Ladyſhip has no taſte of pleaſures, but of thoſe lawful and innocent ones which he allows of, and pleads for. It was a great ſatisfaction to me, to find a proper perſon in a noble family, to which I lie under ſo many obligations, whoſe name, without the leaſt imputation of flattery,

tery, I might prefix to this ſmall Treatiſe, which, as being the performance of one of your own ſex, a perſon of great worth and unſpotted virtue, I humbly preſent to your Ladyſhip, and chearfully lay hold of this opportunity to expreſs with what reſpect and eſteem I am,

MADAM,

Your LADYSHIP's

moſt obliged, moſt obedient,

and faithful humble Servant,

JA. OGILVIE.

DIALOGUES

BETWEEN

Patru and *D'Ablancourt*

CONCERNING

PLEASURES.

The First DIALOGUE.

THE lives of private men are ſeldom regarded, tho' they very often might prove great examples to poſterity; but if men don't act in ſome high ſtation, or ſignalize themſelves by brave exploits, or leave ſome fine writings to keep up their memory, they are buried in eternal oblivion; yet ſome are of opini-

on, that it requires a greater and more elevated genius to act as we ought in a private than in a publick capacity. Why then ſhould not the lives of thoſe who were worthy our imitation be carefully tranſcribed? I can't but believe, if the preſent age would frequently peruſe ſuch papers, it would be of greater advantage to them than the moſt elaborate pieces; it would raiſe a noble emulation in them, and make every one endeavour to act conſpicuouſly in his ſtation; it would teach many how to ſpend that time which they perhaps now think was given them to fool away, and have not the leaſt notion of its ineſtimable value; for which wilful ignorance they will one time or other dearly pay, and to their eternal ſorrow find, that God Almighty expects a ſtrict account of that time they ſet ſo little value on: I wiſh I had eloquence enough to perſuade the world to leave ſhadows, and endeavour after ſubſtantial goods; I ſhould hope to receive a hundred fold for time ſo advantageouſly employed. But alas! ſuch is the corruption of the times, that I ſhould only make myſelf deſpiſed for endeavouring to convince the world of their real buſineſs upon

earth,

earth, and what they were ſent into the world for. Daily experience declares to me this melancholy truth; for how can I believe precepts would be regarded, when the brighteſt examples eſcape our obſervation: whoever regarded any thing in *Patru* and *D'Ablancourt* but their fine writings; but how much more inſtructive were their lives? What good citizens were they? Men of the greateſt probity and juſtice, the moſt exalted faith, and the greateſt wiſdom and ſweetneſs of temper; they were meek, humble, compaſſionate, good, full of all ſocial vertues, and capable of the moſt pure and perfect friendſhip; they had added to theſe perfections the brighteſt wit, ſuch as would have done honour to the *Auguſtan* age, which was the age of politeneſs.

How pure were their manners! how great their piety? *Patru* was a *Roman* Catholick, and *D'Ablancourt* turn'd *Calviniſt*, in which religion he was born; but he was educated in the ſame religion with his friend, and had no motive to turn him from it but conſcience, which made him refuſe very conſiderable places that he would have enjoyed if he had continued *Roman* Catholick.

His zeal for the truth was ſo great, that for three whole years he buried himſelf in the ſearch of it; night and day he was endeavouring to enlighten his mind, and ſtudying what he ought to believe: at laſt he thoroughly convinced himſelf he was in the right.

How can we ſufficiently admire ſuch exceſſive zeal! how many Chriſtians are there who hardly know whether they are Chriſtians or not? who being ignorant of all the precepts of their religion, live as if they were of no religion at all; they continue in that they were born without knowing why; like thoſe travellers to whom all climates are alike, who fix their abode in whatever place a ſtorm or chance drives them to.

The difference of theſe gentlemensre ligion cauſed no breach of friendſhip; the piety of each was exemplary, and appeared in all their words and actions; their converſation was wiſe, delightful, and polite, often mixed with an agreeable mirth, and now and then with a little raillery, which never gave offence, but pleaſure, even to thoſe who were the ſubject of it: in fine, their converſation was always ſo

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inſtructive and agreeable, that all their friends were both improved and greatly delighted by it, which ſeldom happens at the ſame time.

To ſhew the world more fully what ſort of men theſe were, I will relate a converſation between them upon pleaſures, which happened a little before *D'Ablancourt's* death. *Patru* was deſired to go and hear an eulogy on a ſaint, which was to be in a religious houſe in *Paris*, by a very eminent preacher.

He (who was very ſenſible a ſingle word ſometimes touches the heart) perſuaded *D'Ablancourt* to go with him; being always deſirous his friend, whoſe ſalvation was ſo dear to him, ſhould be of that he eſteemed the true religion.

They went together to the ſermon, and were followed by a young gentleman of a bright genius, whom *Patru* was very fond of, and took a pleaſure in cultivating: we are obliged to his memory for the following dialogues, he being preſent during the whole converſation.

As ſoon as the ſermon was ended, theſe gentlemen went to walk in a pleaſant garden that belonged to the houſe. *Patru*

began to examine the eloquence of the preacher, and after ſome general reflections which ſhew'd his piety and good taſte; I wonder, ſays he, that our age, which is ſo very nice in the choice of words, ſhould have ſo little delicacy in the choice of topicks, and that true eloquence ſhould make ſo little progreſs among us: in ſermons we hear nothing natural, nothing that affects or touches the ſoul; our preachers inſtead of endeavouring, as it is their duty to convert their hearers, only ſtudy to pleaſe their ears with fine pompous words; you obſerv'd, that while our preacher was in the greateſt extaſy, the people were in a perfect calm, as little mov'd with his continual noiſe as thoſe that live near the ſea-coaſts are with the beating and daſhing of the waves.

It was a pretty contraſt, ſays *D'Ablancourt*, it diverted me exceedingly; I could not help obſerving, that while he made the roof of the church reſound with his voice, the hearts of his hearers ſeem'd frozen and motionleſs: I can't ſay I was wholly unmoved in this tumult, for when I heard the orator thunder and knock with his feet and hands, I was ſometimes frighted, and at others ſmiled. But

But what ſay you to St. *Paul*, the hermit's raven, and St. *Anthony*'s viſit to him? I own to you, ſays *Patru*, it both mov'd my compaſſion, and made me laugh; for of what uſe was this ſtory to our ſaint's panegyrick?

I ſay nothing of that miraculous bird who uſed to carry half a loaf every day to St. *Paul*; and when St. *Anthony* was with him brought him a whole one; nor of the diſpute that laſted a whole day between theſe ſaints about this loaf, each being deſirous to beſtow it upon his friend; perhaps it might be true.

But what pleaſes me moſt is the compliments our preacher put into their mouths upon this occaſion; Don't you think they were very fine and well turn'd? Theſe ſaints without doubt, ſays *D'Ablancourt*, were well vers'd in the politeſt manners of the age they lived in. I have made this moral reflection from it, that complaiſance is to be met with in deſerts as well as in the courts of princes.

But really this civility is a little too ceremonious, eſpecially when one is very hungry; and the ſaints muſt be thoroughly uſed to mortification to bear theſe things ſo

patiently: But our preacher delivered this dialogue with the ſame tone and in the ſame manner as the reſt of his ſermon.

Good God! ſays *Patru*, ought we thus to abuſe ſo holy a myſtery? Is it not a profanation of the divine word, to mix ſuch ridiculous ſtories with it? Did St. *Auſtin*, St. *Ambroſe*, or St. *Chryſoſtom* talk in this manner? They had no other view but the ſalvation of ſouls, they looked upon the ſtudy of eloquence as a purſuit unworthy their great aim; yet their diſcourſe ſhone with unſtudied eloquence; they were not animated with a borrowed heat, but enlightned by the pure flames of charity.

If our preachers would only deſire the good of their neighbours, and the ſalvation of their ſouls, if they had the piety of theſe ſaints, they perhaps might nearly reſemble them; for good preachers muſt be form'd in the ſchools of piety by the Holy Spirit, and not in the ſchools of rhetorick.

How can moſt of them have the aſſurance to preach to others what they never practiſe themſelves, or hope to fill the hearts of Chriſtians with the Divine Spirit, when their own is void of it? But I wonder when they ſpend ſo much time in the

the ſtudy of eloquence they ſhould know ſo little of it; for the diſcourſe ſhould be plain, full of good ſenſe, and ſolid reaſoning; it ſhould ſhine with a native beauty, and fill the hearers with ſuch tender lively impulſes as warm the heart and move the very ſoul; the violent geſtures ſhould not animate the diſcourſe, but the warmth of the diſcourſe ſhould animate the action.

Our preachers are unlike this; they put themſelves in paſſions that reſemble madneſs, as if hearts were to be melted by noiſe; one would imagine all that was requiſite for a fine preacher was to have good lungs; for they think they have done wonders, when they come out of the pulpit in a violent ſweat.

I agree with you, ſays *D'Ablancourt*, in all you've ſaid; but this was not what gave me the greateſt diſguſt to the preacher we have been hearing; I was moſt ſurprized at his furious declamation againſt all pleaſures without the leaſt exception; whatever uſe we make of them, we muſt be damn'd by his rule if we uſe them at all.

I am concern'd for a thouſand very honeſt friends, who have a great deal of vertue and goodneſs, and yet make no ſcruple of

of enjoying the innocent pleaſures of life; and muſt they be damned for this? Is it impoſſible to ſhew them any favour?

Nay, I tremble for myſelf too; I had a preſent to-day of a couple of fine melons and ſome ſtrawberries: now if all pleaſure be a crime (as our preacher told us) I am not much obliged to the perſon that ſent them me; for if I am a good man they can be of no uſe to me; and he muſt think me very wicked, if he believ'd I ſhould take a pleaſure in eating them.

And yet it would be pity to have ſtrawberries and melons condemned; for all other fruit would fall under the like ſentence, and delicacies and paſtry muſt be avoided like poiſon; nay, I don't know whether mutton muſt not be excluded; for theſe devout gentlemen will certainly in time bring us to live upon roots.

Come, ſays *Patru* ſmiling, you ſeem inclined to carry this doctrine a great way; yet notwithſtanding what you ſay, the preacher was in the right, and pleaſure is a mortal poiſon.

So, ſays *D'Ablancourt*, what are you going to declare war too againſt all the pleaſures of life? do you believe one can't enjoy

enjoy them with a good conſcience? I ever thought, that with all your gaiety you were a very religious honeſt man; but I never imagined an anchoret was hid under ſo ſmiling an outſide, or that you would damn all your friends for a trifle; you will extremely oblige me if you will give me your reaſons for theſe ſtrict morals; it is very pleaſant walking, we have leiſure enough, and we can't chuſe a properer time and place; the fineneſs of the weather ſeems to invite us to pleaſures, if we dare enjoy them.

I will very willingly, ſays *Patru*, give you my ſentiments upon this head in hopes to give you an averſion to pleaſures, if you have not one already, or at leaſt to confirm it in myſelf; for, in my opinion, they debaſe the man and deſtroy the Chriſtian.

'Tis reaſon conſtitutes us men, and can you imagine thoſe who give themſelves up to pleaſures, and are hurried away by them, can poſſibly enjoy the free uſe of their reaſon? or that their thoughts can be conformable to the purity and dignity of their nature? do you believe we are capable of judging right, when we are given up to voluptuouſneſs, or when pleaſures have wholly ſeiz'd the mind?

A man who is enflamed by deſires, who eagerly purſues the delights of ſenſe, the more he enjoys theſe pleaſures, the more he ſtill deſires to enjoy them: Is ſuch a man capable of thinking according to the dignity of his nature? No, it is impoſſible; he has loſt his ſenſes, he is no longer maſter of himſelf; and when the ſoul is thus tranſported out of her proper ſeat, ſhe can't eaſily return to the uſe of her reaſon; ſhe is ſo incumber'd with fleſh, ſhe can hardly breathe under ſo heavy a burden.

Our reaſon and our paſſions are two enemies, who ſtrive hard which ſhall be the conqueror; and if once our paſſions get the upper-hand, they flatter us ſo exceedingly, that reaſon is obliged to yield; for which ever has the command, the other of courſe obeys: there is no medium; for as pleaſure conſiſts in gratifying the ſenſes, it is impoſſible reaſon ſhould keep her ground; when once we give way to pleaſures, ſhe naturally falls.

Now you know we are born for the exerciſe of virtue, and heaven is to be our reward; and ſurely nothing can more diſqualify us for either than voluptuouſneſs; for what virtue will join with her? pru-

dence, which is the pureſt work of reaſon, will never dwell where reaſon itſelf is ſwallowed up in pleaſures.

Can a man who is continually employ'd in ſearch of pleaſure enjoy freedom enough of mind to conſider the future, to guide the preſent right, or to reflect on the conſequences of things? Can he hear the voice of wiſdom amidſt the cries of debauchery? In a word, how can he diſtinguiſh between good and evil, who muſt neceſſarily have no other notion wherein either conſiſts, but in the enjoyment or privation of pleaſures?

You muſt confeſs that the voluptuous cannot be poſſeſſed of temperance, that is the firſt virtue they deſtroy; for the duty and end of temperance is to moderate and calm our paſſions; and the end of voluptuouſneſs is to nouriſh and raiſe them; they are like oil in a fire, whoſe flames would go out of courſe, if there were not freſh ſupplies to feed them.

Pleaſures will agree no better with fortitude, which conſiſts in courage in dangers, and a conſtancy of mind in all misfortunes; for in the firſt place I can never believe that the voluptuous would make

good

good ſoldiers or great commanders; I find no examples of it in hiſtory.

But ſuppoſe, as ſome will imagine, that theſe ſort of people may have courage, it can only be a blind valour, proceeding rather from raſhneſs than true courage; for you may obſerve that theſe heroes are never brave faſting; they draw all their valour from pots and glaſſes, and the way to increaſe it is a great feaſt; there they ſtrengthen themſelves, and their courage proceeds from a brutal ignorance, not a true ſenſe of deſpiſing danger; they are all warmth and fire, and have none of that ſerenity of mind which always accompanies true courage and intrepidity.

So that we may eaſily perceive the bravery theſe people ſometimes ſhew, proceeds either from oſtentation or the fumes of liquor, and that they are generally the greateſt cowards in the world; for true fortitude teaches us to overcome misfortunes, to endure grief patiently, to conquer a falſe ſhame, and courageouſly to bear all wrongs and afflictions, and (which is perhaps the greateſt difficulty of all) to enjoy a great fortune with moderation; and certainly the brave debauchees have none of theſe

great

great qualities; a ſlight wound will throw them into the greateſt conſternation, the leaſt accident terrifies them, they are wild and looſe in their ambition, and an angry word from a prince, which they have eſteem'd a forerunner of diſgrace, has coſt many their healths, and ſome of the greateſt heroes in the ſchool of voluptuouſneſs their lives: and this is not to be wonder'd at; for delights ſoften and diſarm the mind ſo much, that it is incapable of any great or worthy action; ſo that if it is poſſible to find true valour with pleaſure, (which I think it is not) I am ſure it is impoſſible to find magnanimity with it, which is the greateſt product, and higheſt mark of fortitude: juſtice has not a more mortal enemy than voluptuouſneſs; for the attachment to pleaſure proceeds from an immoderate love of one's ſelf, which is the ſource of all injuſtice; for how can they who are over-fond of themſelves ſtudy the advantages of others? how can they who would have every thing that is agreeable and delightful render every one their due? a man that is thus ſoftned by pleaſures will never expoſe himſelf to labour, pain, and grief, if juſtice requires it: Can one that is plunged

in

in debauchery, who leads a life ſo contrary to the intent of nature, can he treat others like men who makes himſelf a beaſt?

What ſhall I ſay of the other virtues? namely, modeſty, friendſhip, ſweetneſs, and complaiſance, innate goodneſs, generoſity, humanity, which are the ſofteſt, ſweeteſt bands of civil ſociety? Can they dwell with pleaſure which is the ſource of inſolence, boldneſs, reſentment, rage, hardneſs of heart, brutality, and an indifference for every one but ourſelves? for generally thoſe who can refuſe themſelves nothing can refuſe every thing to others.

Compaſſion for the unfortunate is generally unknown to thoſe who live in the midſt of pleaſures; they, either through diſguſt or inhumanity, turn their faces from all melancholy objects; they who meaſure all their happineſs by groſs bodily pleaſures, can have no notion of thoſe of the mind; they can never believe happineſs can conſiſt in ſubduing our paſſions, or doing good to others; compaſſion is a virtue ſeldom learn'd in good fortune; for theſe niceties and delicacies of life as they ſoften and effeminate the mind, they likewiſe harden the heart, and render it entirely void of pity or compaſſion. Now

Now I beg you will tell me what remains there are of a man in one who is poſſeſſed of no virtue, and has loſt the uſe of his right reaſon, and all the brighteſt ornaments of his ſoul: Do you think thoſe men who would not be approv'd of by the wiſe heathens can ever make good Chriſtians, when it is virtue alone that makes us truly ſuch? for I am perſuaded the moſt eaſy way of acquiring Chriſtian virtues is to begin with moral ones; as painters always dawb the canvaſs firſt with ſome coarſe colour, before they uſe their azure and gilding, and other fine colours with which they finiſh their pictures; ſo we can hardly at once attain to the perfection of Chriſtianity, but we ought to diſpoſe ourſelves to it by moral virtues: for as we can't be thoroughly good without being Chriſtians, neither can we be perfect Chriſtians without firſt gaining the virtues of morality; for as labourers don't ſow their ſeed till they have firſt prepared the ground to receive it, ſo we ought to cultivate and purify our ſouls by juſtice, wiſdom, magnanimity, and moderation, in order to prepare it to receive the ſeed of Chriſtian virtues, which can never bring forth any thing in

a heart parched with violent paſſions, and polluted with voluptuous pleaſures.

What I laſt mention'd has inſenſibly brought me to what I deſign'd to conclude with, namely, that pleaſures not only debaſe the man, but deſtroy the Chriſtian. This concluſion may naturally be drawn from what I have ſaid, and does not ſtand in need of any great proof to make you ſenſible of it: but this is ſo important a point, that I am reſolved to extend and explain it much more, and in order to it muſt enter into particulars.

You know very well that a Chriſtian's buſineſs is to unite himſelf to God, and that he hopes at laſt to dwell continually with him: all our actions, words, and thoughts ſhould tend to this great end, and as they approach it, or are contrary to it, they are innocent or criminal. If we had preſerved our natural innocence and purity, we ſhould without any pains have been conducted in the right road: but being entirely corrupted by ſin, we were thereby either ſo blinded as not to know the ways of righteouſneſs, or ſo wicked as to walk contrary to them.

But religion is come to our aſſiſtance, and has diſpell'd our clouds and darkneſs; it has taught us the art of guiding our actions to their true end: and adding example to precept, it has given us the life of Jeſus Chriſt, as a perfect pattern for us to imitate.

The Scripture contains this religion; there we may learn what we are to do, and what to avoid; and I believe you will not meet with any paſſage that encourages ſenſuality; but on the contrary the ſcriptures talk of taking up the croſs, uſing auſterities, mortifying our paſſions, breaking off all commerce with the fleſh, and of labours, fighting, and ſorrowing, and all that our preacher told you of. This is giving a terrible blow to pleaſures; for it ſeems to me that we muſt either renounce them or the religion that forbids them.

But I will go yet farther, and ſay, that if the law had not expreſly forbid pleaſures, yet that we ought by the ſpirit to reject them, if what I have ſaid is true, that our actions are innocent, or otherwiſe, as they are conducive to our laſt great end.

Pray examine pleaſures in their moſt favourable light; you can find nothing in

them conducive to this end, but all deſtructive to it: Can you believe that pleaſures, which deform our ſenſes, can contribute in the leaſt degree to our celeſtial happineſs? Senſuality turns and fixes our thoughts and deſires upon ourſelves, nay upon the vileſt part of ourſelves: What part then can God Almighty expect of ſuch thoughts?

In fine, ſince all our actions muſt tend to ſome end, we ought to deſign them for our eternal happineſs, and take care they are always ſuch as may conduce to it, for 'tis the motive of action that determines the merit of it: and it would be both impious and abſurd to ſay we ever had heaven in view in a debauch: Who ever perſuaded himſelf that drunkenneſs would be of uſe towards his ſalvation? On the other ſide, as heaven is our laſt end, can you imagine that earthly pleaſures can have the leaſt conformity to the joys of heaven, or can ever conduct us thither, when they fix our hearts ſo violently on things below, that we have no ſight nor reliſh for any thing but what is groſs and periſhable.

The ſoul can never return into the boſom of God without being as pure as ſhe came

came from him; How then can pleaſures, which defile the body, make us capable of that happineſs? Can we imagine thoſe actions that take off our thoughts from God can ever carry us to him?

You ſee how ill pleaſures in general agree with Chriſtianity; but perhaps there may be here and there one that may be more conformable to its rules; I wiſh there may for your ſake; for I would not make my friends deſpair, I would very willingly have them go merrily to heaven: therefore I will omit a thouſand things that I could add upon this occaſion.

Upon my word, ſays *D'Ablancourt*, that triumphant air becomes ſo rigid an anchoret mighty well; however, we need not preſs you mightily to put on the crown for this great victory you have gain'd in fighting without an adverſary; but here's one ready for you, I deſign to anſwer all your arguments, and to take down a little of that arrogant humour: but however, don't ſpare me I beſeech you, for I deſire to conquer by force, and ſhould not think I gain'd glory enough if you yielded; for, ſays he ſmiling, you ſhall not be the only Bragadochio.

Go on then, and when you rail at pleaſures don't forego that of crying out, *Victoria*, for having fought without an adverſary. Come then, ſays *Patru*, you ſhall be obliged, and I will forget nothing that may make your conqueſt as glorious as you deſire it. Let us then enter into a detail of pleaſures, and ſee which of them will agree with our religion. Love is the firſt and greateſt; there are ſome people who believe it the only true pleaſure: yet notwithſtanding this, it is the plague of human life, and the ſoul has not a more dangerous enemy. I will not talk of all the fooliſh things that are in commerces of gallantry, the tranſports of joy, the exceſſive griefs, the puniſhments, the peace and war, the jealous ſuſpicions, ruptures, quarrels, and agreements, and all the train of amorous follies that divert people of wit, and move the compaſſion of the good.

But don't you think it a piece of impiety to degrade the Divinity, as they continually do, to exalt ſome *Iris*, and to make a goddeſs of one who perhaps is not a pretty woman. It is wonderful that our mouths, which were made only to praiſe God, ſhould be profaned by ſuch impertinent and idolatrous compliments? Pray

Pray conſider the repeated oaths and lies, the curious care in dreſs, the ſoftneſs, loſs of time, the ſuperfluous expences, and the vanity that is attached to grandeur and fine clothes, and love's whole equipage, all inſtruments of pride and luxury; and try if you can reconcile all this with the purity that Chriſtianity requires.

But men go yet farther, and won't ſtop at theſe fooleries, eſpecially in our days, when they glory in theſe conqueſts: I believe the world never was ſo bad in this particular; they make adultery a diverſion, and it paſſes in all places unpuniſhed; all other crimes are puniſhed, none eſcape but thoſe that are a violation of the divine laws: people ſuffer ſeverely for the ſmalleſt theft, becauſe this touches men's intereſt; adultery only affects their honour, and is a breach of God's command.

I have often ſeriouſly wiſh'd, that thoſe princes who take *Auguſtus* for a pattern to copy after, would imitate him in the puniſhment of adultery, and do that for the honour of God which that emperor did for the love of virtue: if they would do thus, their happineſs would ſo far exceed his, that their glory, and the peace and felicity

licity of their reign, would be the leaſt of their reward.

However, God has in ſome meaſure revenged himſelf by the diſtemper he has brought upon us, that was unknown to our forefathers, and never was among the heathens; it is a melancholy diſtinction, but it is very juſt, that if Chriſtians, who are ſo enlightned by the Goſpel, and have ſo pure a religion, are more wicked than thoſe idolaters, they ſhould be more ſeverely puniſhed for it; and that God Almighty ſhould give us leave to gueſs at the puniſhment of our ſouls, by what the body ſuffers for ſo great a crime. Be it as it will, love is ſo dangerous a pleaſure, that the leaſt degree of it is a ſin; it glides ſo imperceptibly into the heart, that one often is not at firſt ſenſible of it: this is the way it generally enters into innocent hearts; and in my opinion the moſt dangerous ſentiments tender and virtuous ſouls can feel, are thoſe which are ſo nicely diſguiſed, that they don't at firſt percieve them; and we are never nearer the precipice than when we have ſeen an amiable perſon, and think we are not in love, but often reflect on her beauties, without imagining we are caught in the ſnare. *Cupid*

Cupid is an arrant cheat, and a great hypocrite; he often diſguiſes himſelf under the moſt ſacred name of friendſhip, but we ought carefully to avoid being ſo catched; for if we don't, we ſhall too ſoon diſcover the deceit, and find that what we only thought a generous friendſhip is the moſt tormenting of all paſſions (love.) The way to avoid this danger, is, not to give it the leaſt entrance under any diſguiſe; for one can hardly long think a young perſon of a different ſex agreeable, without being wounded by the little god.

Perhaps you think I go too far; but indeed I don't go beyond nature: beauty is not to be trifled with, a look, an action, a word often proves our ruin; the ſight of a lovely perſon is dangerous, and there is no ſafety but in flight. Oh liſten not to the voice of the charmer, charm he never ſo wiſely! Two fine eyes are the moſt beautiful works of nature, the moſt pleaſing ſight to mankind, but the moſt dangerous to Chriſtians; the deadlieſt poiſon comes from the ſweeteſt lips, it charms and deſtroys at once; and a ſmile that embelliſhes a beauteous face often makes ſuch impreſſions on the heart, as are never to be effaced;

faced: And how many, who have eſcaped theſe ſnares, have been caught by flattery? I mean of the fair ſex, for I ſpeak of both. How many, from believing themſelves belov'd, have thought themſelves obliged in honour to make ſome returns; and where all charms of dreſs and perſon have eſcaped their obſervation, the pleaſure of being admir'd has quite undone them. But I am afraid I amuſe myſelf too long upon this topick; ſo true it is, that when we but talk of love, there is ſomething ſo ſweet in it, we are never our own maſters, tho' at the ſame time we condemn it. Therefore, dear ſir, let us avoid theſe dangerous delightful objects, ſince it is much eaſier to condemn the paſſion than to eſcape it.

I long to hear what you can ſay to juſtify this pleaſure; I am ſure I have been afraid of making myſelf guilty, by explaining the dangers of it; my modeſty oppos'd my intereſt, and I rather choſe to loſe ſome advantages, than to put myſelf to the bluſh.

Perhaps you will be for anſwering what I have not ſaid; but without that I believe you will have great occaſion to invoke the aſſiſtance of *Venus* and the *Graces*, to go on a little farther. One great folly of love

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is, that it never comes alone, but is always accompanied by other dangerous pleaſures; luxury always attends it; for you know the old proverb, that love is cold without *Ceres* and *Bacchus*. Now luxury, which is ſo neceſſary to love, is in itſelf a great vice.

All your rhetorick can't juſtify the loſs of time and the care that is generally taken in ſtudying what will pleaſe; all diverſions are procur'd, every thing that can gratify the ſenſes. How dangerous then muſt this pleaſure be, that brings in all others? Lovers prevent hunger; nay, there are people in the world that don't know what it is; they make an art of exciting the appetite, even to gluttony, by exquiſite meats; air, earth, and ſea are ranſacked for them, and people's wits are ſet to work in inventing ſauces and ſtudying new ways of dreſſing meats: How much better would all this time and money be ſpent in actions of religion and charity?

What think you of theſe exceſſes? when people who are derived from heroes, and fancy themſelves demi-gods, ſhall give their great names to ragous and liquors, and eat and drink, not to ſatisfy hunger or thirſt, but

but gluttony and drunkenneſs? Do you approve of this? Do you think it poſſible to be a good Chriſtian amidſt ſuch debauches? or do you believe that a ſoul clog'd and loaded with meat and drink is fit for the kingdom of heaven? or that a man of this ſtamp walks in the direct road to *Paradiſe?* Can you poſſibly in cold blood aſſert ſuch a paradox?

Can a man, whoſe mind is bent upon ſenſual pleaſures, whoſe ſpirits are dull'd or diſcompoſed by the fumes of wine, think much of the duties of religion, or merit the rewards religion promiſes us?

Add to all this, how many families are ruined by theſe exceſſes, which is a greater ſin than people generally imagine; for a father is in duty bound to improve and take care of his eſtate for the good of his ſon; for his eſtate is not properly his own; he ought to look upon himſelf as ſteward, and think that he muſt give an account to his children for all the waſte and robberies he has committed upon it: I can't help calling this a ſort of parricide, and I believe there is nothing more diſpleaſing to God Almighty. But to return to luxury; I have often been amaz'd to obſerve, that

that not only people of faſhion, but mechanicks, will not ſhow their heads if they can't afford to keep a great table. Frugality, that was ſo laudable in our forefather's days, now ceaſes to be a virtue; and to ſay the truth, we can never think gluttony a vice, while we eſteem ourſelves in honour obliged to ſatisfy it. If we conſulted the true maxims and ſpirit of Chriſtianity, how far ſhould we be from bluſhing at this incapacity? rather how much ſhould we glory in it? we ſhould then learn that a little ought to ſatisfy a Chriſtian, and that the plaineſt and pureſt meats are moſt proper to maintain virtue, health, and ſtrength; I ſay virtue, becauſe nothing is more deſtructive to it than gluttony; for to eat or drink to exceſs is the ſource of all corruption; and whatever one takes more than is requiſite for the ſupport of health, is given for the nouriſhment of vices and paſſions.

It is impoſſible therefore to be a good Chriſtian without confining ourſelves to the plain food nature deſigned for us, and which we may every where meet with; but we muſt obſerve ſome rules even in this; for it is often requiſite to deny the

demands of hunger; for abſtinence, which among the ſages of antiquity was only thought a piece of decorum, is now become a Chriſtian virtue.

They that break horſes not only uſe ſtrength and skill, but work 'em hard, and ſtint 'em in their diet, in order to mortify them, and take down their heat; and we ought to overcome our paſſions, reſtrain our ſenſes, and ſubdue our bodies by hunger.

We can't be too careful, our reaſon ought always to keep guard; ſhe is often injur'd, if faſting does not aid her: for our paſſions are like thoſe wild beaſts that are tamed with a great deal of care and trouble; but if they are not continually kept in ſubjection, they return to their former ſavageneſs, and often devour thoſe who take care of them.

In fine, delicious food, that is, high diſhes, were not deſign'd for Chriſtians; the wiſe heathens ate only to ſupport life; but Chriſtians ought only to eat enough to keep them from dying.

So that you can never perſuade me nor yourſelf to allow, that thoſe whoſe happineſs conſiſts in eating and drinking, and

who by degrees deſtroy their lives by luxury, are in the right way to ſalvation, unleſs you can imagine that one may gain heaven by loſing one's reaſon. You may judge as you pleaſe; but for my part, it makes me melancholy to ſee Chriſtians, who were created for ſo noble and divine an end, take ſuch delight in the pleaſures of taſte, and give themſelves up to it, as if they were born for no other end, but to eat and digeſt.

Indeed their intervals they fill up with gaming, that is to ſay, with another pleaſure, which is a compound of all paſſions and vices, or at leaſt by gaming they may be drawn into all; treachery, anger, cheating, quarrelling, ſwearing, hatred, and libertiniſm, generally reign at gaming-tables; and people are often drawn into all other ſins by it: and the beſt that can be ſaid of it, is, that it is a loſs of time, which, conſidering the ſhortneſs of our duration, ought to be much better employ'd. I am ſurprized to ſee that gaming, which ſeems the greateſt deſtroyer of union and friendſhip, ſhould now appear the only band of it; for it is that alone brings people together, and every day there are appointments made,

made, at which all endeavour to cheat and ruin one another.

This is one of the miracles of avarice that reigns at preſent; and what makes it yet more wonderful, is, that this is the moſt induſtrious paſſion in the world, and yet is ſo miſerably blinded, as not to know that people never enrich themſelves by play, and not to improve and make a right uſe of the daily melancholy examples before their eyes of thoſe that have been utterly undone by it.

You are very ſenſible this is directly contrary to Chriſtianity, and very prejudicial to civil ſociety. How many noble eſtates have been loſt by dice? Gaming is, in my opinion, of as pernicious a conſequence as duels; the one deſtroys the life, the other the ſubſtance.

Tho' I deſign'd only to be a hearer, ſays *Patru*'s pupil, yet I can't forbear obſerving your compariſon is very juſt; I am perſuaded, if the king would aboliſh gaming, he would gain no leſs honour by it than he has already done by prohibiting duels.

In reſpect to converſation, ſays *Patru*, I believe I do gaming too much honour to rank it among pleaſures; for converſation

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was formerly thought one of the greateſt charms of ſociety, and uſed to be full of politeneſs, wit, and pleaſure; but in this age thoſe delights are paſt, for gaming has baniſhed all that's bright, agreable, and innocent, and a few game-phraſes are ſubſtituted in their ſtead: I ſpeak of the moſt innocent converſations, for very often one hears nothing but ſwearing, lying, and blaſphemy.

How is it poſſible to preſerve purity and innocence in the midſt of ſuch corruption? How can we be enough upon our guard, when we have ſuch examples always before us? which are the ruin of virtue and goodneſs.

Silence is the ſecureſt virtue, and beſt becomes a Chriſtian, who ought not to talk much, but to ſorrow for his ſins. Man has no enemies more dangerous than mankind, and he muſt always be arm'd with the greateſt courage, humility, and patience, to endure the daily affronts and contumelies he will meet with, which are apt to fill an unguarded mind with haughtineſs and ill nature, and a love for none but himſelf. If he is ſo great to be flatter'd, the contagion is not leſs dangerous;

he may then in converſation ſometimes meet with wit and politeneſs, but hardly ever with wiſdom and piety: When we converſe with others, we draw in a ſort of peſtilential air, which is apt to corrupt even minds the moſt conſtant and beſt prepared.

Prayer and adoration are the moſt uſeful intercourſes and the ſweeteſt commerces a Chriſtian can have: What pleaſure does a refined ſoul enjoy in converſing with its God? in praying to him, and praiſing him continually: but he is to be found in ſecret, and not in the midſt of common ſociety, which is generally ſo wicked, to exclude piety, and it is now ſeldom to be found but in deſerts, where St. *Paul* and St. *Anthony*, and other good Chriſtians, have carried it; and to give a true deſcription of her abode, ſhe wanders among rocks and foreſts, which thoſe illuſtrious perſons ſanctified by their preſence.

What ſhall I ſay of tennis, billiards, hunting, dancing, and publick walks? for mankind have been very ingenious in finding out ways to deſtroy their ſouls, by fooling away their time and their eſtates.

How dangerous is even reading? Without care in the choice of our books, thoſe who read only out of curioſity, and not for edification, to what dangers are they expoſed? How inexcuſable are thoſe who ſpend their time in reading romances and other dangerous books? What a ſhameful idleneſs is this? and what other books do we generally ſee in people's hands, but ſuch as ſoften the mind by love, or give a lively deſcription of vice, or ſometimes with falſe colours nicely diſguiſe it with the name of virtue? I give you leave to defend theſe books, provided you bluſh at the ſame time, and ſo yield to nature what perhaps, for argument ſake, you will deny to virtue and religion. Theſe books and plays have been the greateſt enemies I believe religion ever had in the world; for what man is ſo wiſe and ſpiritualized as not to be mov'd at a play? and ought we to be ſo at any repreſentations of vice and prophaneneſs? Perhaps you'll ſay, that virtue is generally at laſt rewarded, and vice puniſhed, and turn'd into ridicule. But do we puniſh ourſelves when it has once enter'd into the heart? all the tender, delightful, and agreeable paſſions are repreſented on

the ſtage in ſo lively and bewitching a manner, that nothing can be more dangerous; for when the mind is ſo ſweetly ſeduced by the deſcription of ſuch charming pleaſures, it has not ſtrength enough to guard the heart, which is ſo delighted with theſe ſweet emotions.

Now I cannot believe any thing to be innocent, which not only raiſes our paſſions, but teaches us by the moſt engaging words and actions the art of gratifying them; and theſe inſtructions are generally given by perſons that might move our paſſions without ſpeaking; for the beauty of the players, their ornaments, and the magnificence of their dreſs, the gracefulneſs of their action, the decorations of the theatre, the beauty and variety of the ſcenes, the lights, the tears the actors ſhed; all theſe things are ſo apt to enflame us, that we muſt be harder and more inſenſible than braſs or marble not to be moved by them.

If there is muſick added to all this, I do not know what can ſave us; for muſick alone has the power of making dreadful impreſſions upon our hearts, eſpecially at a time when they are ſoften'd by other arts, when there is nothing noble or great

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in it, but that the tunes are almoſt as melting and laſcivious as the words they are made for. *Venus* and *Bacchus*, the *Loves* and *Graces*, are generally the ſubjects of theſe entertainments, and their ſongs are as amorous and infamous as poſſible: all they aim at is to give a lively and agreeable deſcription of pleaſures, and to repreſent life as a puniſhment without them, or rather as a continual death, and that theſe are not only the greateſt, but the only Gods. Now pray are not theſe very fine morals for Chriſtians to learn?

Nay, this ſoft fine muſick is come into our churches, and the Pſalms of *David*, and the moſt divine anthems, are ſet to *Opera* tunes.

If we ſung to pleaſe God, and not men, we ſhould take care to have our muſick ſolemn, awful, and majeſtick, fit for the honour of God, and to fill our hearts with zeal, piety, and religious tranſports; ſuch formerly was that muſick whoſe celeſtial harmony raviſhed and tranſported the prophets, and made them utter oracles for our ſalvation. *Patru* here continued ſilent a ſhort time, then looking upon *D' Ablancourt*, what admirable things, ſays he,

pleaſures are? ſome of them hazard our ſalvation, and the moſt innocent make us forget our duty; for when we ſwim in pleaſures, the preſent objects ſo tranſport our minds, that we are incapable of all other thoughts; we enjoy ſuch earthly happineſs, that we can hardly believe it can be exceeded; and we are often ſo blinded, as to imagine there will be no end of theſe tranſitory pleaſures, tho' daily experience ſhews us the ſhortneſs of their duration. But pleaſures not only make us forget our duty to God, but likewiſe to our neighbour, as I have already hinted; for when a man is thus in full enjoyment of all things, he never reflects what multitudes there are that ſtand in need of the moſt common neceſſaries of life; he who knows not what hunger is, does not conceive to what it may reduce people of the greateſt merit; if he did, he would ſurely ſpare from his abundance, to relieve the neceſſities of his fellow-creatures; he would ſometimes faſt by choice, to give meat to a hungry ſoul: and if he did thus, he would then be ſenſible what true and laſting pleaſure virtue creates in the mind, and learn to deſpiſe what he before thought the perfection of happineſs. They

They who give way to pleaſures don't know when to give over; and they are ſo very liberal to themſelves, that they can ſeldom ſpare their neighbours any thing; ſo that you ſee pleaſures deſtroy our duty to God and to our neighbour, which are the two great commandments, on which hang all the law and the prophets.

After this, I have ſure no occaſion to ſhow the injury pleaſures do in the world; but if you look into hiſtory, you will there find the miſchiefs they have done; they have deſtroyed monarchies, and undone the greateſt men; and you will likewiſe find, that the moſt accompliſhed heroes have been form'd in the ſchool of abſtinence and auſterity; and the moſt illuſtrious perſons of all ages have had the greateſt ſtrictneſs of manners, and contempt of what the world falſely calls pleaſure.

The *Aſſyrians*, who had the greateſt empire in the world, fell by the debauchery of their prince: The *Perſians* ruin was more owing to their vanity and luxury than to *Alexander*'s bravery.

But the *Roman* empire, whoſe foundation and power was more owing to the virtue than arms of its citizens: What do

you think occaſion'd its fall? was it not becauſe they degenerated from the wiſdom and auſterity of their anceſtors, and fell into all ſorts of pleaſures and debaucheries? for empires cannot ſubſiſt but by the methods they were at firſt eſtabliſhed.

Don't you think thoſe great men, (*Cyrus*, *Themiſtocles*, *Ageſilaus*, and his great *Theban* rival *Epaminondas*) who have been the wonder of all ages, have been as much admir'd for their temperance and abſtinence as for their victories and good fortune.

And among the *Romans* have not the *Fabricii*, the *Manlii*, the *Claudii*, and all thoſe other great perſons, who were moſt of them taken from the plough, and placed at the head of their ſenates and armies; do you believe it was for enjoying or deſpiſing pleaſures, that they were rais'd to theſe ſtations, and afterwards laid ſuch noble foundations for empire? 'twas the ſeverity and integrity of their lives occaſion'd that ſaying of a doctor of our church, that its greatneſs and holineſs was a reward for the virtues of *Rome*'s firſt citizens.

But to deſcend yet lower, pray conſider *Fabius Maximus*, *Paulus Emilius*, *Cato* the *Cenſor*,

Cenſor, *Lælius*, and the two *Scipio Africanus's*; for I with pleaſure repeat thoſe great names that give me ſo lively an idea of virtue; all theſe men were indeed more polite than thoſe I before mention'd; but their virtues were as great and as ſevere, they equally rejected all ſorts of pleaſures; and without this moderation they had certainly never arrived at that degree of glory to which they roſe.

Now if we paſs to leſs ſhining and more peacable merit, caſt your eyes upon *Lycurgus*, *Solon*, *Demoſthenes*, *Cicero*, *Homer*, and *Virgil*, you will find they all acquir'd their wiſdom and perfection in the fineſt arts, chiefly by divorcing pleaſure; they all deſcribe it as a ſavage monſter, which ſoon or late deſtroys all his ſlaves. Do you think any of theſe men had been capable of preſcribing laws, and ſetting examples for the world to imitate, nay even for the braveſt and politeſt part of it, if they had not taken the greateſt care to preſerve their underſtanding pure and free from the contagion of pleaſures: they were ſenſible that nothing ſo ſoftens the heart, nor ſo deſtroys a bright genius; they call them the ſource of all vices, the allurement of the wicked,

wicked, and the ruin of commonwealths.

I could here mention a *Robert* Earl of *Paris*, a *Bertrand*, a marſhal *Boucicaut*, a conſtable of *Cliſſon*, an Earl of *Dunois*, and a *Charles Martel*, whoſe merit was not inferior to the *Greeks* and *Romans*; his life, great warrior as he was, if we compare it with the kings of his time, will ſhew us the melancholy effects of pleaſures; for it was pleaſure that made theſe unhappy princes inſenſibly loſe their crowns, and which ſet them upon the heads of this great man's ſucceſſors.

If the empire fell to decay after the death of *Charles the Great*, it was owing to the pleaſures and indolence of his ſucceſſors, who choſe rather to enjoy the pleaſures of fortune voluptuouſly, than to merit them by labour and virtue.

I am glad, ſays *D'Ablancourt*, to hear you bring in our own heroes among thoſe of antiquity; we ſhould do ourſelves a great deal of honour in often mentioning them; we have many noble examples of illuſtrious men, who only want a great hiſtorian to make them as celebrated as any of the ancients, only their names are not quite ſo ſoft; but that roughneſs would diſappear by

by frequent uſage. Says *Patru*, I am pleaſed with your obſervation, which is very juſt; but to return to my diſcourſe: I own there have been ſome few great men who have delighted in pleaſures, but they no ways contributed to their greatneſs, and they were aſhamed of themſelves for enjoying them, and did it but ſeldom; and they have ſtood in need of all their virtues to balance this vice; and if you carefully examine their characters, you will find this vice made them loſe many of the advantages of fortune and nature.

One ſingle pleaſure has tarniſhed *Alexander's* glory, and made him loſe his life in the flower of his age: The delights of *Capua* robb'd *Hannibal* of the fruit of his victories; and the pleaſures of a few days had ſo dreadful a concluſion, that his country by them loſt the empire of the world, and he himſelf his liberty.

Reflect on what you ſee every day before your eyes, the revolutions of families, the fall of the nobleſt houſes, the decay and utter extinction of many great families; and if you look into the true ſource, you'll find they were all loſt by pleaſure: there is hardly two in a hundred ruined

by

by misfortunes that are not of their own cauſing; it is always either careleſſneſs and truſting to ſervants, gaming, love, good cheer, or ſome other pleaſure that has undone them: But without having recourſe to profane hiſtory, or our own age, let us look a little into the Holy Scripture, and among many other inſtances we ſhall find that *Sampſon* and *Solomon* dearly paid for pleaſures; a fine hand, or a fine eye, has deſtroy'd all *Solomon's* wiſdom; *David* was very near being undone by them; and if he had not uſed the greateſt auſterities, he had never become a man after God's own heart.

Was it by pleaſures that the apoſtles and their ſucceſſors eſtabliſhed our holy religion, and ſpread abroad the knowledge of the Goſpel? What fatigues, what hardſhips did they endure? How did they deſpiſe and deteſt earthly pleaſures? they were troubled at the entertainment they ſometimes met with in friend's houſes; they deſir'd and coveted faſts and auſterities; they treated their bodies like enemies, and as they knew the dangers of concupiſcence, they rather choſe to retrench ſomething that was neceſſary, than to allow any thing to pleaſure; in a word, they ſaid they rejoiced

joiced in being thought worthy to ſuffer for Jeſus Chriſt.

It was not by pleaſures that the martyrs have cemented the foundations of the church with their blood, and ſown the ſeed of all Chriſtian virtues, which our ſins hinder the fruits of in our hearts.

And theſe anchorets our preacher ſpoke of, who lead ſuch angelick lives ſo diſtant from all pleaſures, what can you think of them? ſure you muſt either believe they did very ill, or elſe you muſt abandon the defence of pleaſures; for the nature of them is ſuch, that all the wiſe heathens deſpiſed the uſe of them, and thought them dangerous and infectious: and there never was a ſaint who did not think pleaſure a ſin. You have not one example on your ſide; you may draw examples from antiquity for all other things, this is the only thing without one in its favour. Now certainly if pleaſures are innocent, it is very ſtrange they ſhould be condemned by all wiſe men of all ages and religions. I think there are but two ways of enjoying them, that is, either groſly or with delicacy. Now we will ſee which of theſe beſt agrees with Chriſtianity; and in order to a right judg-

ment, I will give an example of two courtiers; one ſeem'd born to enjoy and to give pleaſure to all he convers'd with; his perſon was perfectly agreeable, he had a peculiar grace in all his actions; there was muſick in his voice, his wit was fine, his manners eaſy; he ſaid the fineſt things in a careleſs manner, and always ſeem'd ignorant of his own merit, which he left others to obſerve.

He was naturally inclin'd to gallantry; but he was not contented with being barely lov'd; he always made himſelf eſteem'd by his real merit; he neither lik'd the too forward nor the coy; he was very careful of the reputation of his miſtreſſes, and never choſe any that were negligent of it; he always admir'd modeſty, and deſpiſed boldneſs; he only ſought favours from thoſe he really lov'd; he wonder'd any perſons could court women they had no eſteem for; he admir'd beauty, but he was moſt charm'd with the beauty of the mind, particularly wit: at his table all was nice and genteel, his ſervants waited handſomely, he was attended by men out of livery, clean and well dreſſed; his company was well choſen, and never many at a time; the con-

converſation was polite and entertaining, never ſerious, but generally turn'd upon gallantry, fine poetry, or diverting ſtories; he lov'd raillery, and believ'd a coxcomb was deſign'd by heaven for a diverſion to men of wit; his ſatyr was always fine; he could not bear any thing rude or groſs.

This agreeable converſation was often interrupted by fine muſick, which he always had at his table; and before or after eating he ſometimes entertained his friends with concerts compos'd of a few fine voices and inſtruments, but no loud muſick.

He dreſſed well, but did not value himſelf upon it; he took the ſame pleaſure in dreſs as ſome do in fine flowers; he lik'd to look at what was rich or beautiful, without placing any merit in it.

He was delighted with witty converſation, he lov'd reading, and had a nice judgment; but he took the greateſt pleaſure in thoſe books that move the paſſions agreeably.

He ſometimes amuſed himſelf with making verſes, but none ever knew it but one particular friend, who was an excellent judge of what was fine; he lov'd to hear himſelf prais'd, when he was ſure he ſhould

not

not be flatter'd; he thought that the moſt agreeable way of indulging his vanity.

He eſteem'd friendſhip one of the greateſt pleaſures of life; and in order to be fully ſenſible of it, he lov'd his friends entirely, and took a delight in obliging them; he was pleas'd when others did the ſame by him; but he lov'd much better to confer than receive obligations.

Pleaſures never made him negligent of his honour, he was careful of his reputation, generous and ſincere; he did not ſpend his eſtate in debauchery, but he ruin'd himſelf politely.

Oh the charming man! ſays *D'Ablancourt*; what pity 'tis there is not ſuch a one in the world, and that this deſcription ſhould only be the product of a fine invention. How? invention, ſays *Patru*; if there had not been ſuch a perſon I ſhould never have thought of the deſcription; but you compliment him highly to believe it imaginary; and to puniſh you for your incredulity, ſays he ſmiling, I won't tell you who I mean; but you ſhall ſee the other, and I am ſure you will not here accuſe me of invention, for you have ſeen too many of theſe originals.

He

He, proud of his high birth and great eſtate, thought both were given him for the enjoyment of his pleaſures, to which he entirely reſign'd himſelf; whoever could drink a great deal, was welcome at his table; he required no other merit in his companions. His table was loaded with meat, he lov'd to ſee great pyramids brought in by twenty people, and to have his table crowded with company that would eat till they loathed the victuals, this delighted him.

He lov'd to hear all the company talk at once, and no one knew what was ſaid by any but himſelf; his floor and ſide-board ſwam in wine, and the ſmell of that and *aqua vitæ* (which was burnt in glaſſes) he thought the moſt agreeable perfumes in the world.

His companions were generally players and buffoons, he made them take all the freedom that was poſſible with him, graciouſly ſaying, that *Bacchus* as well as *Venus*, made all the world upon a level; ſo that all took care not to offend him with paying him any reſpect: he never ate or drank to ſatisfy nature; but when they

had eat to gluttony, they drank to as great excess to wash it down.

He never chose persons of distinction for his mistresses, they demanded too much respect; he took care to procure those that he might take the freedom to beat if they disobliged him: he never had one mistress twice.

He could not bear to have people go to tragedies; he never went but to laugh; he had heard indeed, that what he took delight in seeing was irregular; but he said he did not want to laugh by rule: he was of that king's opinion, who, when he had heard a fine player upon the lute, said, he had much rather hear the neighing of his horse; so this gentleman lik'd no musick but drunken songs.

He was often surprized at being desir'd to rise in a morning, without knowing how or when he got to bed; he was pleas'd with growing fat, because he thought it a sign his appetite increased; but his greatest trouble was, that notwithstanding all the pains he took to get a strong head, it still continued so weak, that he could not drink ten bottles without losing his sense and reason.

Now

Now pray, ſir, ſays *Patru*, which of theſe gentlemens lives is moſt agreeable to religion? perhaps you think the latter moſt guilty; now I am not entirely of that opinion; for he is led on by his paſſions and a brutal blindneſs; he has never leiſure, his blood is never cool enough to give him leave to conſider. Now the other makes no uſe of his reaſon, but to undo himſelf; he refines ſenſuality, he plays with it, and inſtead of flying from vice, he dreſſes her in all her gayeſt ornaments, to make her appear amiable.

This diſpoſition of mind is certainly more dangerous than the other, and there is leſs hopes of his return to virtue; for it is much more difficult to reſiſt delicate than groſs pleaſures, becauſe the deformity of the latter ſo eaſily diſcover themſelves, and generally ſoon or late frighten the boldeſt ſinner from ſuch a courſe; but thoſe agreeable vices get poſſeſſion of the heart by their fair appearance, and we admire them without imagining they are crimes. Let us not flatter ourſelves, we are often in a wrong way without knowing it, and then we are in the greateſt danger; ſelf-love often takes this delicacy in vice for

moderation. We hardly believe there is any debauchery in theſe choſen pleaſures; and perhaps there may not in heathens; but they certainly are not proper for Chriſtians, we cannot be too careful to guard againſt them; for however they may be refined, whatever politeneſs or agreeableneſs we may find in them, they will always render us weak and effeminate, and have ſomething criminal enough in them to undo us; for vices finely diſguiſed are no leſs vices than others, and ſecret poiſon kills more ſurely than ſtronger.

Now, in my opinion, all the care we ought to take of the body ſhould be only in order to make it healthy and vigorous; this both religion and prudence teaches us to do; but whatever is not for this end, but purely for pleaſure, is both folly and impiety, ſince pleaſures never tend to the increaſe of health or ſtrength; for nothing is more deſtructive to both: experience ſhews us, that thoſe who are addicted to wine or women are generally very feeble.

Good cheer, and other pleaſures, will at firſt add a beauty to the complexion, and make the ſpirits lively; but it is a falſe luſtre, a flower that ſoon fades; for old age,

age, or its infirmities, ſoon overtake them, and thoſe debauchees either die very young, or are decrepit half their days.

And ſuch ſort of people are the greateſt ſlaves in the world; for what ſervitude is ſo deſpicable as being ſubject to our paſſions: this we ſhould be thoroughly ſenſible of, if we did but conſider the dignity and excellency of our nature, (I cannot repeat this too often) we ſhould then find nothing ſo ſhameful as a life of luxury and pleaſure; nothing ſo commendable and praiſe-worthy as abſtinence and moderation; for pleaſures level us with brutes, and can we conceive a more monſtrous conjunction?

Caſt your eyes inward, examine well your ſoul, then ask yourſelf ſeriouſly, if what is agreeable to brutes ought to be ſo to you as a man, much leſs as a Chriſtian? for my part, when I ſee a pigeon eat, drink, and ſleep, court his mate, and coo over her, play and divert himſelf in the air, I cannot conceive it proper for me to do the ſame, nor that you or I ſhould ſpend our time in ſuch a manner. Believe me, ſir, we are born to a nobler end; and we may all be ſenſible that there is ſomething

in pleaſures that defile our natures; we have an innate ſenſation of this that frequently diſcovers itſelf; for is it not natural to feel a ſecret pleaſure, when we hear any body is turn'd from a life of debauchery to piety, virtue, and abſtinence? we are charm'd, we are ſeiz'd with veneration and admiration, when we read the lives of thoſe great ſaints, who have left us ſuch bright examples of ſelf-denial and mortification.

We feel a vaſt delight when we ſee any perſon but faintly imitate theſe noble patterns of heroick virtue; we are touched with the plain frugal lives of our forefathers: Who does not admire the conduct of *Henry* IV. of *France*, when he fought for the crown? Are we not charm'd to behold him ſo indefatigable, always on horſeback labouring inceſſantly, and ſpending leſs time in ſleep than his competitor the duke of *Maine* did in eating.

We admire even this part of his life, we take his part, we intereſt ourſelves in his favour ſo ſtrongly when we read his hiſtory, that we ſeem to fight for him, we rejoice to find him victorious, whilſt the duke of *Maine*'s debaucheries eclipſe all his

his great qualities, and make us deſpiſe him. Was not *Henry* III. ador'd by every body while he was brave, active, and vigilant, always victorious? ſuch charms are there in virtue, when not darkned nor obſcured by luxury: but when he came to the crown, and gave himſelf up to idleneſs and pleaſure, how much did the people deſpiſe him whom before they ador'd? and at laſt their averſion increas'd to the greateſt degree that ever was known in *France*.

The people by this gave a proof, that the moſt vulgar ſouls have ſuch an averſion to looſeneſs and debauchery, that it is not to be conceal'd, tho' gilded over with the greateſt magnificence: for ſurely there never was ſo great a change as in *Henry* III. they no longer remember'd him as conqueror of *Jarnac* and *Montcontour*; and it is not to be imagined how much they thought the King of *France* beneath the duke of *Anjou*. Now from whence do you think proceeds this love of the people for him that deſpiſes luxury, and their averſion for him that abandons himſelf to it? It is certainly inſtinct; it is that innate ſenſation that is not to be extinguiſhed, which

plainly ſhews us there is nothing more unworthy, nor more oppoſite to our natures, than the love of pleaſure; our minds ought to be free from all baſe, impure, or earthly mixtures, and to be rais'd to divine things worthy their bright original, always fixed on heaven, and elevated by a noble grandeur to deſpiſe all earthly pleaſures; for while our ſenſes are enchanted by them, they make us bankrupts to honour and conſcience; for the ſoul that is thus poiſoned walks far from the paths of virtue, and can hardly eſcape the dangerous precipice of vice.

If then pleaſure thus degrades us, we may juſtly conclude 'tis a ſin to yield to it; for we are not born for ourſelves, we are not our own maſters, we are God's workmanſhip, and have no right to pollute ourſelves; if we are not allow'd to deface our bodies, how much worſe is it to diſfigure our ſouls, which are the repreſentatives of their great Creator; and after all, it is a dreadful extravagance to hazard our ſalvation for what will not make us happy even in this world; for luxury is an inſatiable tyrant, that is never ſatisfied; and it is much eaſier to be happy, by at once forſaking pleaſures, than by enjoying them.

We

We ſee a great number of poor people, who never taſted pleaſure, and yet live eaſy and contented, without once thinking of it: perhaps you'll ſay they are diſturb'd that it is not in their power to enjoy it; but I believe you are miſtaken, this want of power moderates and calms the paſſions; unhappy thoſe who make uſe of the power of being wicked!

Let us then renounce thoſe charms which contribute ſo little to our earthly happineſs, and ſo greatly hazard our heavenly. We may eaſily leave them if we pleaſe, we often forſake them becauſe we are tired with them; let us then do that for the ſake of virtue which diſtaſte would oblige us to. Pleaſures ſoon vaniſh, and leave no trace behind them of any thing but repentance; but the piety which accompanies an auſtere life gives ſolid ſatisfaction to the mind, a laſting peace that nothing can diminiſh; the fear of God's judgments confirm it, and nothing can diſturb it.

It is certain we all naturally deſire to be happy, but pleaſures will not make us ſo; a Chriſtian need not be obliged to luxury and fortune for happineſs. He is happy

becauſe

becauſe he is a Chriſtian; and the more auſterely he lives, the more he merits that title; his joy is perfected by croſſes, ſufferings, and afflictions; and whatever mortifies the ſenſes, he is happy in puniſhments, and death itſelf; and the martyrs expreſs'd their felicity among racks and torments: it is by acts of mortification that we imitate theſe martyrs, and by ſhewing ſuch fortitude and courage in afflictions.

God Almighty, by making us men and Chriſtians, has given us a great work to accompliſh. Much care and conduct is required in the performance; for as nothing would be more ridiculous upon the ſtage than to ſee one who repreſents a king behave like a footman; ſo nothing is ſo ſcandalous in the world, as to ſee a man act like a brute, by giving himſelf up to ſenſuality. We ſhould be yet more convinced of this truth, if we would conſider life as a play, where, in the laſt act, which is death, our pleaſures will forſake us, and leave nothing but terror and remorſe behind.

It is a ſhame that we ſhould talk ſo much of pleaſures; we ſacrifice to the *Loves*, the *Smiles*, the *Graces*, and all other pleaſures,

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as they did to *Citherea*, and thoſe divinities; but we can never go to heaven in ſuch company. Salvation is generally found in deſerts and retirements.

The ſanctity and purity of our lives and manners ought to be ſuch, that luxury dare not approach us; we ſhould never be overcome by it, if we did not conſent to it; but we ſtretch out our hands to it, its falſe luſtre deceives us, we run after it, as if there was the leſs danger of falling into a pit for its having flowers growing over it, or as if the fall would prove leſs fatal.

We ought not to take delight in ſenſual pleaſure, it is too much debaſing ourſelves. We whoſe bodies are the temples of the Holy Ghoſt ſhould be continually bleſſing and praiſing of God, and remembring that the divine part of us, our ſouls, will one day return to God who gave them.

The Holy Ghoſt will never enter into that heart where voluptuouſneſs abſolutely commands? Believe me, all our happineſs in this world ought to conſiſt only in the hopes of what is laid up for us in heaven, and in endeavouring to make ourſelves fit for it; by meditating continually on univerſal truths, by doing all the good we are capable

capable of, and by praiſing and adoring that power who will ſo infinitely reward us; theſe are the true pleaſures of a rational ſoul, this will procure us a laſting incorruptible happineſs.

It is in this world we commit ſin, it is in this world we are to repent and make expiation for it; and if I may ſo ſpeak, it is a ſin for a Chriſtian to wiſh for earthly happineſs; let us not imitate our father *Adam*, a dreadful pleaſure caus'd his fall; and ſhall we deſire to converſe, or to reconcile ourſelves to ſo mortal an enemy? No, God forbid! Let us always remember what our redemption coſt; and then ſurely we can never love a thing which coſt our Saviour Jeſus Chriſt his life.

And however holy ſuch tranſports may be, as make us rejoice, and think it a happy crime that procured us ſo great a Redeemer; yet we ought to conſider that this Saviour, who ſo juſtly merits our admiration, gratitude, and love, alſo demands our grief; we ought to rejoice and weep for him; and to believe that a man given up to luxury will not be pure enough to be received into the arms of Jeſus Chriſt, if pleaſures ſtifle our reaſon, if they deſtroy

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all moral and Chriſtian virtues, and degrade us ſo entirely, I don't know how we can ever yield to them; it is a ſhame there ſhould be ſo great occaſion to declaim againſt ſo dangerous a vice, and that I ſhould preach a ſermon upon it perhaps with as little ſucceſs as that we have been hearing.

Yes, ſays *D'Ablancourt*, I perceive there is a contagion in ill examples, and this is not an improper addition to your ſermon. Good God! what ſevere morals have you been inculcating! you ſend us all into deſerts, but you don't conſider, that if the whole world ſhould take your advice, they would be no longer deſerts.

One would imagine by your diſcourſe, that it is impoſſible to be a good Chriſtian without living among ſavages; you unmercifully and entirely baniſh religion out of our cities, tho' they are ſo fill'd with altars, that we may imagine Jeſus Chriſt is in every part of them; but I muſt endeavour to ſoften this terrible ſentence, by anſwering every part of your ſermon.

But before I proceed, I think myſelf obliged to tell you that the religion I profeſs myſelf of ought not to prejudice you againſt

againſt what I ſay upon this occaſion; you know my ſentiments, and I am perſuaded our religions don't differ in the purity of manners; this topick equally concerns both; however to take away all objections, I will draw all my arguments and examples from your religion, and take my proofs from thoſe principles you cannot deny; my cauſe is ſo very good, that I will not refuſe my adverſary's evidence: therefore, to begin, I am very ſenſible man was not born for pleaſures, that they ought not to be the motive nor end of his life, but that he is born for a nobler purpoſe; yet, tho' he ought not to place his happineſs in the enjoyment of them, nor to believe he came into the world for that end, yet that does not forbid his uſing them ſometimes, to ſweeten the cares, and ſoften the troubles of life: man is a being great, noble, and excellent; but he is likewiſe weak and ſubject to infirmities, he cannot labour inceſſantly; it is neceſſary that his mind ſhould be ſometimes agreeably amuſed, when it is wearied and fatigued with the troubles that on all ſides ſurround him.

Now I agree with you, that virtue, and even honeſt labour, are preferable to diverſions;

verſions; and if there were no medium between a life of pleaſure without virtue, and a life without the leaſt pleaſure, but adorned with honour and piety, I ſhould not conſider one moment which to chuſe.

But thank heaven, it is poſſible to be a very good Chriſtian, and yet enjoy ſome pleaſures, provided we keep within bounds. Tho' virtue is beyond compariſon moſt valuable, it does not from thence follow, that all pleaſures are criminal; for it is eaſy to prove, that only the abuſe of them is ſo.

For in the firſt place you know we are allow'd to live according to the dictates of nature, which are nothing elſe but a law within ourſelves, that God Almighty implanted in every creature when he firſt form'd it; this inſtinct, which is diſcover'd in every animal, according to its different kind, is a ſacred rite that may and ought to be obey'd: we are only to diſtinguiſh right, and to take care not to pervert nature; and God has given it ſuch peculiar marks, that it is impoſſible to be deceiv'd, if we give ourſelves the trouble to obſerve them.

Now there is no ſentiment more natural to the mind of man than the love of plea-

pleaſure; and this we have a thouſand proofs of: for we ſee all people, however different their climates, laws, or manners, agree in this one point, the love of pleaſure; they differ in the manner of enjoying it, but they all agree in the eſſential part. Now if the univerſal conſent of the whole world is the voice of nature, God's intention cannot be more clearly and evidently proved.

Let every one conſult his own boſom, and he will find a ſtrong inclination, an inexhauſtible love for every thing that gives him pleaſure; there are ſuch powerful charms in what we think agreeable, that we cannot eaſily reſiſt them; we are hardly born, but we give ſome proofs of this inclination, we ſuck it in with our milk.

For we muſt look into cradles to obſerve nature in her purity; for in children ſhe appears without art or diſguiſe, ſo that one may juſtly call them the true mirrors of nature. I ſpeak not of the pleaſure of eating, and other conveniencies of life which they are very ſenſible of; but they hardly open their eyes before they ſeek for diverſions; they rejoice at fine ſights, which they ſoon diſtinguiſh from diſagreeable ones,

they

they run after paſtimes, and are very witty in inventing innocent plays, and apply themſelves to them with great attention; they are not children in this reſpect, for the oldeſt perſons could not ſhew more diligence.

As their years increaſe, you will find their love of pleaſures likewiſe increaſe; they differ according to their age in the choice of them, but they are ſtill always pleaſures they purſue; ſo deeply is the love of them rooted in our natures, that it accompanies us thro' the whole courſe of our lives. But what yet is a plainer proof of this inſtinct, is her conduct towards us; for after having inſpired into us a ſtrong deſire for life, nature has mixed with life thoſe delights which are proper to captivate the heart of man, and has implanted in man a diſpoſition to reliſh them, and a deſire to ſeek after them.

But that all our deſires ſhould not center in ourſelves, ſhe has given to every man a deſire to perpetuate himſelf, and qualifications proper for it; and for this end ſhe has from the beginning inſpired man and woman with a reciprocal deſire for each other, and has attached to this union

the moſt lively and ſweeteſt pleaſure mortals can ever feel.

But this is not all; for as men could not live alone, and as nature deſigned them to live together, in order to unite this union the more firmly, and to invite every one to this ſociety, ſhe has taken care to form them in ſuch a manner as to mind and body, that they may be agreeable to each other. Our minds and bodies are the moſt perfect works in the univerſe, and man is the moſt glorious object we can behold: What form, what ſhape, what face, what features, what an exact proportion of parts is there in man! accompanied and adorn'd with ſo charming and ſo ſweet a grace, that no other object can afford ſo much pleaſure!

What delight do we not find in converſation? in talking to one another? every air and geſture, our very voices have a peculiar charm, not only when we ſing, but even when we talk: Theſe graces are particularly found in women.

All theſe delights are ordered in ſo wiſe a manner, and with ſuch conſummate prudence, in order to make us ſeek after one another, and unite together, that we might have

have the happineſs of having all our wants ſupply'd by the ſame perſons that give us pleaſure. So admirable and gracious are all the works of God, that there is nothing made for uſe, but what is likewiſe agreeable and full of beauty.

From hence it follows, that the love of converſation and fear of death (which are the moſt lively and moſt natural paſſions of the ſoul) naturally incline us to the love of pleaſure, and whatever will procure it, ſince death cannot be avoided, nor life preſerved, but by ſuch methods to which God has attached ſome degree of pleaſure; ſo that if a Chriſtian muſt renounce all pleaſure, he muſt renounce himſelf and all converſation and ſociety, which ſoon would put an end to human kind.

All the beauteous works of nature, in my opinion, plainly prove my argument to be true; every thing we ſee delights us, the vaſt quantity of trees, plants, and animals, of fruits and flowers, of which ſome at once pleaſe all our ſenſes; and the ſea is likewiſe full of both uſeful and delicious things, the lights of heaven, the ſky, all thoſe beauties that continually diſplay themſelves: Can the moſt inſenſible behold them without pleaſure?

I defy you to turn your eyes to any part but where you may find ſomething to pleaſe, delight, and attract the ſight; every ſtep we take we tread upon ſome beauty; nature ſeems to take a pleaſure in obliging us, ſhe is always bringing forth and diſplaying to us new beauties; every ſeaſon abounds with different kinds, and the novelty and variety of them delight us no leſs than their vaſt abundance. In a word, nature's liberality is equal to her riches, and it is impoſſible to avoid the pleaſures that on all ſides ſurround you, which crowd upon you, and ſeem to ſeek for you.

Now certainly if God Almighty had deſign'd entirely to forbid us the uſe of pleaſures, he would not have beſtow'd them upon us in ſuch vaſt profuſion; he would have ſet bounds to them, and have given us only what was convenient for the ſupport of nature; a little bread and water, and the skins of beaſts, were ſufficient for us: but it has pleaſed him to give us a hundred things more for pleaſure than was requiſite for the ſupport of nature.

Now can we imagine that God Almighty created theſe things for our deſtruction? has he ſo beautifully enamel'd the flowers

with

with ſuch lively colours only to tempt us to ſin? and are all the various beauties of nature deſign'd for no other end?

Let us not conceive ſo unjuſt and unworthy an opinion of the Divinity; it would have been better for us to have had no being, than to be obliged to live among all theſe charming objects, if the enjoyment of them is criminal; if our ſtate was thus miſerable, we muſt adore God 'tis true, but our adoration muſt be mixed with ſighs and tears.

Now it would be full as abſurd to imagine, that God created theſe things for no uſe: No, we may be aſſured all theſe wonderful works were not the effects of chance, or made without deſign, or only to behold: No! they were all created for our uſe and enjoyment, they were given us by a bounteous liberal hand, by an infinite wiſdom and goodneſs, whoſe eyes are always open to our wants and infirmities, and continually pouring his benefits upon us; and it would be the higheſt folly in us, who are daily begging new bleſſings, not to enjoy thoſe God has already vouchſafed to us.

I am certain you are thoroughly ſenſible of the truth of what I have ſaid, for it is all entirely drawn from nature. Yes, yes, ſays *Patru*, you have certainly heard the voice of nature, by your underſtanding ſo well her ſecrets; ſhe has unboſomed herſelf to you, and has dictated all your arguments. Go on, we ſhall be well inſtructed by her; you will lead us into the full poſſeſſion of pleaſure without doubt; but only I am afraid there is one little difficulty that will ſtop us in the way.

Firſt I muſt obſerve, that nature's careſſes are as dangerous as thoſe of indulgent mothers, who ruin their children by exceſſive fondneſs. Beſides, I don't think this inſtinct you talk of, this natural reliſh that men have for pleaſures, proceeds from nature in her purity, but from nature corrupted by ſin. Well, ſays *D'Ablancourt*, let us conſider man before his fall, and let us ſee whether he did not enjoy ſome pleaſure in that ſtate of innocence: God, as ſoon as he was created, placed him in a delightful garden, watered by refreſhing rivulets, and fill'd with the moſt exquiſite fruits, which he was commanded to eat.

Now doubtleſs God made him capable of enjoying theſe delights, and implanted in him a deſire of ſeeking after them; for without this they had been uſeleſs to him; his very firſt ſentiment was the love of pleaſure, and God Almighty allow'd him all the means that were poſſible to gratify this inclination.

And to render the poſſeſſion of theſe enjoyments the more agreeable, he added to them the pleaſures of converſation, by giving him a woman, and inſpir'd him with ſuch love and tenderneſs for her, that *Adam*'s firſt words gave her a proof of it.

God commanded him to work in this beautiful garden, to manure and improve it, that by this agreeable viciſſitude, and by ſo ſweet an amuſement, his pleaſures might be diverſified, and his felicity more perfect; for work was not in itſelf a trouble, it is only become ſo, by being accompanied with ſweats and fatigues and by proving often unſucceſsful.

So far then was man in his innocence from being denied the uſe of pleaſure, that he had never left that delightful place, if he had not loſt his innocence; and ſince

his fall, the ſame inclination for pleaſure continues in his poſterity.

Now I don't believe that our firſt nature was deſtroy'd by ſin, it was only corrupted; the ſame inclinations ſtill continue, only they are diſguiſed and confounded by our miſerable corruptions, like gold before it is purged by fire, which tho' it has ſo much droſs mixed with it, yet the gold remains, tho' it is ſo diſcoloured you can't diſtinguiſh it.

If one ſhould pour ſomething into a veſſel of precious liquor that would ſpoil the whole, yet this good liquor would ſtill remain in the veſſel ſo entire, that if we were to uſe any art to ſeparate theſe two liquors, we might draw off the good without leaving a drop of it, or any of its vertue: in like manner all the ſentiments of nature in her purity ſtill remain in us, tho' they are ſo corrupted by ſin, that we cannot diſtinguiſh nor follow them.

From hence proceeds our natural compaſſion for the unfortunate, our love of doing good, the pleaſure we feel in virtue, and the delight in ſeeing others poſſeſſed of it; from hence we are ſenſible that there is a God, and that we ought to

love him, that we know we ought to do as we would be done by, that we love employment, and cannot bear continual idleneſs, and that we have an inclination to pleaſure, as we had before our diſobedience; ſo that this inclination proceeds from nature in her purity, and not from ſin.

All the difference is, that it was at firſt guided by the Spirit of God, and was clear, wiſe, and always confined to lawful objects; but now it is changed, our imaginations are blind and wounded, and hurry us to ſhameful extravagancies: ſin often turns our minds from innocent to criminal objects; but it does not from thence follow, that pleaſure does not take its riſe from nature; the deſire of it certainly does, but the ill uſe of it proceeds from ſin.

Now if we do but confine ourſelves to innocent objects, ſuch as God has allow'd us, we ſhall not do amiſs: the ſight of all beautiful objects, the uſe of the moſt excellent fruits, tenderneſs for a lawful companion, the pleaſures of ſociety, agreeable works or amuſements; theſe were all allow'd in a ſtate of innocence, and are not at preſent forbid us the uſe of, if we exerciſe moderation, and keep within due bounds.

Reaſon,

Reaſon, and thoſe ſparks of virtue that are mixed with our corruption, have enlightned ſome, and taught them to obſerve theſe rules; *Cato*, *Socrates*, and *Ariſtides*, and ſome other heathen ſages, have lived by the light of nature with ſo much virtue and integrity, that we are ſorry they were not acquainted with the true God.

But the light of nature is not ſufficient to inſtruct us in our duty, nor to make us place our affections right.

Moſes at firſt, and Jeſus Chriſt after him, have opened our eyes, and taught us how to diſtinguiſh between nature and ſin, to avoid evil, and do good, as we ſhould have done, had we not fallen; for all their laws only tend to bring us back to the purity of our nature; and as the pleaſures I ſpeak of were not contrary to that purity, it follows that theſe two religions have not endeavoured to retrench this inclination, but only ſhew us to what things we ought to confine it. God, in the ancient law, is ſo far from forbidding us the uſe of pleaſures, that he promiſes what will produce them to thoſe who keep his commandments. Now pray tell me if you think the innocent enjoyment of the bleſſings of life, which

was a gift of God to reward the virtues of the *Jews*, is become a crime in us; ſetting aſide a few ceremonies, we almoſt follow the ſame precepts, and ought we not to expect the ſame promiſed reward?

I don't know, ſays *Patru*, whether I ſhould here tell you what has been a thouſand times repeated, that God thought fit to gain theſe ſenſual people by ſenſual rewards; but he treats us in a nobler manner; we who ſhould be more enlightned by the purer light of the Goſpel, and who are call'd to a more glorious reward, God was willing to gain us to righteouſneſs by a more exalted proſpect; the *Jews* had the promiſe of the earth, but we are promiſed the joys of heaven.

Very well, ſays *D'Ablancourt*; but pray were the promiſes to the *Jews* confined to the earth, and had they no hopes beyond this life? Surely they expected eternal happineſs after death, as well as we, in the enjoyment of our Lord. Our hopes of heaven were equal, and why ſhould not our earthly enjoyments be the ſame? Why ſhould we only be deprived of the pleaſures of this life?

Why

Why ſhould we partake but in part of their promiſes? Is not the God of *Abraham*, *Iſaac*, and *Jacob*, likewiſe the God of us Chriſtians? Are we, who are God's children, leſs dear to him than the *Hebrews*, who were his ſlaves?

All the difference I find between us, is, that God loudly and openly promiſed his earthly bleſſings to the *Jews*; but he treats us with greater diſtinction; he only mentions them to us, but he neither treats us with leſs honour nor leſs goodneſs; he promiſes to us the joys of heaven, and earthly joys he throws in over and above; and from his words it conſequently follows, that he deſign'd the bleſſings of the earth as a preſent reward to thoſe who render themſelves worthy of the joys of heaven.

But as for the *Jews*, the lives of the Patriarchs, from whom this people deſcended, may ſerve for an example; never any people lived with more probity, nor a greater veneration and love of God; yet they all endeavoured to acquire and enjoy this world's goods; *Abraham* had a great many veſſels of gold and ſilver, and abundance of jewels, and a large family of ſervants,

vants, or he could never have overthrown four kings that were join'd together againſt him; now ſuch vaſt opulency could not be enjoyed without pleaſure, for the bare poſſeſſion of riches and plenty is agreeable.

Behold *Abraham*'s ſons; ſee *Joſeph* maſter of a great kingdom, ador'd by all the people; look upon *David* the moſt holy of his ſucceſſors; all theſe Kings and Patriarchs, after having worſhipped God with great fervency and devotion, freely enjoyed the bleſſings he beſtowed ſo liberally upon them.

Thoſe Patriarchs you ſpeak of, ſays *Patru*, enjoyed thoſe bleſſings with moderation, and without ſetting their hearts upon them; their lives were not always happy, they met with many misfortunes, but we ought not to think their lives examples for Chriſtians, who have received more holy and more auſtere laws.

I will allow, ſays *d'Ablancourt*, that they enjoyed the bleſſings of life, without ſetting their hearts upon them; and I never once ſaid we ought to fix our hearts upon pleaſure: All our diſpute is whether we may or may not enjoy the bleſſings and pleaſures of life.

I agree with you that we are not to make pleaſure our ſole employment, we are only to amuſe ourſelves with it ſometimes, we are to enjoy it without fixing our minds upon it, but pleaſure taken moderately is nevertheleſs pleaſure.

If the Patriarchs lives were mix'd with croſſes and afflictions, are ours now a days leſs ſubject to misfortunes? do we leſs want relief and conſolation? If I agree with you that we ought to ſuffer all the ills the Almighty ſends us, with patience and reſignation, does it thence follow, that we muſt not enjoy his bleſſings? As for what you ſay of the lives of the Patriarchs being no examples for Chriſtians, I am aſſured you only ſaid it for diſputing ſake, to make me anſwer you; for if I am not deceiv'd, they were enjoin'd the ſame ſeverity that we are; and I think they have in all ages been propoſed as perfect patterns to us, their lives were ſuch as might juſtly make us bluſh, and excite our admiration.

Where can you find a Chriſtian who has ſuch faith and magnanimity as *Abraham*, ſuch courage, plainneſs of heart, and hope as *Jacob*, ſuch moderation and generoſity as *Joſeph*, and ſo much zeal and piety as *David*?

vid? All theſe great perſons were anticipated Chriſtians; and would to God we could but reſemble theſe men who were ſo much beneath us, and that we knew how to reliſh the pleaſures they enjoyed by practiſing their virtues. For my part, my opinion upon this point is ſo very different from yours, that I deſigned to have begun my argument, by citing the lives of the Patriarchs for examples, in order to have convinced you, that pleaſure is not a crime in our religion; their lives ſo truly chriſtian was to me an undoubted proof of it; but I find now I muſt convince you in a more exact and clearer manner.

Firſt then, if pleaſure was inſpired, and the love of it admitted into nature in her purity, as I have already proved that it was, then it certainly may be admitted into Chriſtianity, becauſe religion is not come to deſtroy, but to perfect nature.

As in the midſt of ſin and darkneſs we were incapable of following nature right, as we had not light enough to diſtinguiſh her dictates from thoſe of ſin, nor fortitude enough to obey them, Jeſus Chriſt is therefore come to our aſſiſtance; he has given us precepts and grace, whereby we may both

both know and practiſe our duty, as we ſhould have done before the fall; ſo that, as I have already obſerved, religion was eſtabliſhed to bring us back to our firſt happineſs, by teaching us to know good from evil; ſo that as the enjoyment of pleaſures was then allowed in the purity of our nature, it certainly is lawful for Chriſtians, provided we keep within thoſe meaſures preſcribed in the precepts of our faith, as we ſhould in our innocence have been guided by an inſtinct of nature.

This appears to me very plain; but before I proceed, I muſt beg you will anſwer me two or three queſtions. That I will very willingly, ſays *Patru*; pray begin, you are maſter and I the diſciple.

Pray tell me then, ſays *D'Ablancourt*, is there but one ſtate or degree of men in the Chriſtian religion? Yes, ſays *Patru*, there are two general ones; one is the common ſtate, and the other the ſtate of perfection. Very well, ſays *D'Ablancourt*, will you be ſo good to deſcribe theſe two ſtates particularly? With all my heart, ſays *Patru*: Thoſe who have forſaken all for the ſake of God and religion are in the ſtate of perfection; and thoſe who enjoy what God has

has given them of the bleſſings of life, they are in the common ſtate.

Now pray, ſays *D'Ablancourt*, is it the duty of every one to embrace the ſtate of perfection? No, ſays *Patru*, but tho' we are not all obliged to embrace it, yet we ought to draw as near to it as we can, and to be as perfect as our worldly affairs will permit us.

You anſwer very well, ſays *D'Ablancourt*, if you go on thus we ſhall make you underſtand reaſon, and you will be fit for the enjoyment of pleaſures. Pray now, continued he, have not both theſe ſtates their degrees of perfection, their diſtinct rules, duties and obligations? I am apt to think that the ſtate of perfection has ſtricter rules and greater obligations than the common ſtate. I own it, ſays *Patru*, and I believe I perceive where all your queſtions tend. Well, ſays *D'Ablancourt* ſmiling, you brighten wonderfully; I fancy preſently your ſtrict morals will grow more civilized, let us proceed; ſince their obligations are different and diſtinct, it thence follows, that what may be a ſin in one ſtate, may not be ſo in the other, and that therefore thoſe in the common ſtate may do what is pro-

per to that ſtate, without being obliged to thoſe particularities that are neceſſary in the ſtate of perfection.

This is very right, ſays *Patru* ſmiling, but every one in their turn; I was juſt now maſter, now I am your ſcholar. You ſee, ſays *D'Ablancourt*, the inconſtancy of the world, I who was juſt now diſciple am now become the maſter.

But pray, ſays he with a ſerious air, has a gentleman, a citizen, a magiſtrate, a courtier, who are all as you allow in a common ſtate, have theſe any occaſion to live like monks or hermits, who are in the ſtate of perfection? I have already, ſays *Patru*, told you they have not.

Well, ſays *D'Ablancourt*, ſince theſe people may be allowed to keep and improve their eſtates, ſurely they will not ſin if they enjoy them; for poſſeſſion without enjoyment is of no uſe. Well, ſays *Patru*, they may enjoy them with moderation: I meant ſo, ſays *D'Ablancourt*, but this moderate enjoyment of wealth does not hinder its being the ſource of pleaſures, nay the very poſſeſſion may be delightful to us; ſo that, by your own rule, the Chriſtian religion does not eſteem pleaſure a ſin in the com-

mon

thon ſtate. I own, if there be any who have the courage and conſtancy to reject all pleaſures, and to live in a conſtant courſe of abſtinence and ſelf-denial, who the nearer they approach to innocence, the more they mortify the body, and perſecute it with hunger and thirſt, and continual hardſhips, who endeavour by theſe voluntary puniſhments to retrieve the misfortune of not being martyrs, who in fine long inceſſantly for the happy moment, that will break their chains, and deliver them from the bondage of life; I own to you I look upon ſuch men as ſomething divine; I don't know whether we ought to call them men, who are ſo much above humanity: Such were thoſe ſaints who have left us the model of perfection, they lived in the body as tho' they were not in it; they make me continually queſtion whether they were not angels: Now whoever chuſes this ſtate of life, I think they ought not to enjoy the moſt innocent pleaſures.

But for thoſe who have not entered into this exalted ſtate, but continue upon the publick ſtage, they can never be blam'd for a moderate enjoyment of the pleaſures

and bleſſings God has beſtowed upon them, ſince the poſſeſſion of them alone is a pleaſure; and we find thoſe who have had the greateſt piety and virtue, have always allowed themſelves the uſe of ſome pleaſures: I ſpeak not of the firſt Chriſtians, who eat heartily even in their churches, and St. *Paul* who ſpeaks of it, does not blame them for their good cheer, only he would have had them given part to the poor, who were troubled to ſee them eat ſuch good proviſions, while themſelves had not a bit of bread.

But if we carefully conſider the life of the bleſſed Jeſus, we ſhall not find all pleaſure to be a ſin; you know he in his own perſon experienced all conditions, in order to ſanctify them all, and to inſtruct us in our duty in every eſtate of life; the time he paſſed with his ſuppoſed father, the converſation he had with particular perſons, his friendſhips, and other actions of his life, may all inſtruct us in the common ſtate, wherein he never condemned pleaſure as a crime.

He performed his firſt miracle at at wedding, and at thoſe feaſts pleaſure always abounds; whatever piety reigns in the gueſts,

gueſts, they never go with grave or auſtere faces; and Jeſus ſeem'd to authoriſe innocent mirth at ſuch times by his preſence: You will tell me that this wedding is only mentioned for the ſake of the miracle, and that there is a myſtery hid under it; but in theſe actions there is the thing itſelf and its ſignification, but the ſpiritual ſenſe does not deſtroy the reality of the thing.

It is certain that our Saviour changed the water into wine, and that he was at a wedding, which ſhews us he did not diſapprove of the innocent pleaſures that are taken at ſuch times; for if he had, he would not have been at ſuch an aſſembly, nor would he have done a miracle upon a thing he thought might prove an ill example.

At another time he did not ſcruple to jeſt upon a doctor he ſupp'd with; it was indeed for inſtruction, but the raillery was inſeparable from the inſtruction.

Chriſt had proviſions carried with him, and money too; he eat with publicans, who in all likelihood kept as good tables as our publicans do now; and he eat and drank freely with them: I know he did it in order to convert them; but yet if theſe

plentiful meals had been criminal in themſelves, Jeſus Chriſt would not have been a partaker of them, he would have choſe ſome other time to inſtruct theſe people; for as a wicked motive may render a good action wicked, we are not to do evil that good may come of it; and a good intention cannot ſanctify an ill action.

Now all thoſe who have imitated Jeſus Chriſt in the common ſtate, have not declared war againſt all pleaſures; *Theodora*, *Conſtantine*, *Charlemagne*, St. *Lewis*, thoſe illuſtrious perſons did not abandon their wealth and greatneſs, becauſe it was not neceſſary in the common ſtate; but they returned God thanks for them, they rejoiced in them, and made others rejoice by their beneficence.

You have had a biſhop who was a great enemy to my religion, and yet was juſtly eſteem'd by his adverſaries, I mean St. *Francis* of *Sales*; and tho' he was by his function obliged to greater ſtrictneſs and purity of life, than people of the world, yet he allowed himſelf the uſe of innocent pleaſures.

He had no ſuperfluities at his table, he baniſhed the leaſt idea of debauchery, but his

his diet was nice and well-dreſs'd; he mortified himſelf by abſtinence at proper ſeaſons, he ſighed for the evils he ſometimes foreſaw; at other times he enjoyed his friends, he laughed, and diverted himſelf with them.

When he was at the *French* court, he moderately enjoyed the favours he there received; he did not ſhun mirth and entertainments; he had no notion that a good Chriſtian muſt of neceſſity be an anchoret at St. *Germains* or *Fontainbleau*. I brought you this example, becauſe it is known to every body, and becauſe he was one of your own religion.

But beſides the common ſtate, and ſtate of perfection, there are other particular ones, for particular perſons and conditions; of which there are ſome that cannot poſſibly avoid pleaſures: as for example, the officers of the crown, people in high ſtations, a prince, theſe are by their ſtations obliged to live in a court, where pleaſures on all ſides ſurround them, and they can no way defend themſelves from the uſe of them.

Ought theſe then to quit the ſtations God has placed them in? or (if you think

they may without a crime continue there) muſt they become inſenſible to all the pleaſures they behold? or do you think it in their power to be ſo? when they ſup with the king, can they be deaf to the ſound of fine hautboys, flutes, and violins, which 'tis impoſſible to hear without pleaſure.

But if theſe people were not at court, yet they meet every where with freſh delight; the eaſe and plenty they abound in, the honour and glories that attend them, muſt conſequently give them pleaſure, ſo that without they entirely diveſt themſelves of every thing, and bid adieu to the world, it is impoſſible for them to avoid pleaſures: Now as it certainly is lawful and innocent to live in that ſtation where God has placed us, and to act ſuitably to the greatneſs of our births and fortunes, it certainly is likewiſe lawful and innocent to enjoy the pleaſures attach'd to our condition.

Let us carefully diſtinguiſh the common ſtate from the ſtate of perfection; if only thoſe who are in the latter are in a ſtate of ſalvation, if they are the only patterns of a truly Chriſtian life, woe be to thoſe who are by nature, birth or providence, placed in the common ſtate. But

But it would be a ſin to judge in this manner; without doubt thoſe who have choſen a ſtate of perfection, juſtly deſerve our admiration, but it certainly is no crime not to do it; it would not be for the advantage of mankind to have all the world feed on roots, and live in caves and rocks; and I am very ſure all men are not deſtin'd for ſuch a life; the weakneſs of our natures requires ſome eaſe and reſt, and we are continually ſeeking for what you with ſo much ſeverity condemn; would to God for the ſake of perfection, we could as eaſily forget we are men, as we can exclaim againſt the weakneſs of human nature; but that is impoſſible, and thank God this ſublime ſtate is not indiſpenſably neceſſary to ſalvation.

Heaven has more crowns than one; the brighteſt are without doubt reſerved for thoſe divine ſouls who are arrived at a ſtate of perfection, but thoſe who have choſen the other ſtate will not loſe their inheritance; the reaſonable enjoyment of the goods of this world will not deprive them of the happineſs of another; there is a certain degree of piety and virtue proportion'd to our common ſtate, which tho' not ſuffi-

cient for the greateſt ſaints, yet is ſufficient to make us of the number of the elect.

You now ſee that neither nature in her purity, the ancient law, nor the examples of the *Jews* and Patriarchs, and greateſt ſaints, nor does Jeſus Chriſt himſelf condemn the moderate uſe of innocent pleaſures.

Now this almoſt anſwers your whole argument, for if refin'd pleaſures are not incompatible with religion, they can never be ſo with reaſon, nor the virtues you talked of, ſince Chriſtianity is the utmoſt perfection of reaſon and virtue; and in reality your ſatyr only turns upon debauchery, which I condemn as much as you do; but that I may leave nothing unanſwer'd, I will take notice that you ſaid, all actions that give us pleaſure eſtrange us from our duty to God, and are conſequently criminal; now I think your conſequence not juſt, for many actions of our lives, to ſpeak properly, regard only ourſelves, and have no direct tendency to God alone, yet all theſe actions may not be blameable; for if they were, we might ſay it is a great ſin to eat, drink, or ſleep, or to ſatisfy all the neceſſities of nature; for it would be abſurd

ſurd to think that ſuch kind of actions have any direct tendency to God alone, nor we never imagine that in doing them we have no other view than his ſervice.

It is in my opinion a groſs miſtake to believe, that we ought in every action of our lives to have our thoughts fix'd on God. If I am not miſtaken, it is ſufficient to propoſe him as our ultimate end, and to have a general deſign to live for his ſervice; ſo that our pleaſures, which may properly be number'd with eating and drinking, and thoſe other actions which chiefly regard ourſelves; I ſay in my opinion they are not ſo criminal as you repreſent them to be, becauſe they are all included in our general intention of living to God's ſervice.

And certainly, if we judge clearly of things, it is not pleaſure in itſelf, but the abuſe of it that is criminal; and we ought therefore nicely to diſtinguiſh between uſe and abuſe; for the things we call pleaſure are often odious becauſe they are to ſuch exceſs; for if we call voluptuouſneſs, or the horrible debaucheries of thoſe who are ſlaves to their paſſions, and are guilty of all the criminal extravagancies that the moſt corrupted nature can delight in,

in, pleaſures, I agree with you that in this ſenſe pleaſures are ſinful: I am very ſenſible that ſuch a life is not only contrary to religion, but to the purity of our nature, to reaſon and virtue; I look upon this ſort of people to be impious and infamous.

But if you take pleaſure in the ſenſe that I do, that is, in an eaſe and freedom of mind, created by a moderate enjoyment of the bleſſings of life, and a conſcience free from guilt, I cannot think that pleaſure in this ſenſe can be criminal.

Condemn then as much as you pleaſe all thoſe who are delighted only with debauchery, and who can ſometimes find no other charm in what they admire, but their being forbid the uſe of it; but let us treat thoſe with more candour, who confine themſelves within the bounds religion has preſcribed, and with wiſdom and gratitude enjoy the momentary pleaſures they meet with here below.

Indeed we have almoſt perverted every thing that is good, we ſhut our eyes to reaſon and religion; for we have all ſuch ſeeds of virtue in us, as would, if rightly improved by religion, enable us to lead happy lives; but almoſt as ſoon as we are born,

born, we plunge ourſelves into corruption, and confound our natural ſentiments with falſe opinions; we ſeem to ſuck in error with our milk, and when we go from our nurſes to our ſchool-maſters, our minds are ſo prejudiced by wrong notions and falſe opinions, that it is difficult to implant virtue; and often our maſters are themſelves ſo corrupt, that they never endeavour to teach us wiſdom and virtue; they only endeavour to make us fit for this world, without telling us of another; they never mention religion to us, 'till our vices are too deeply ingrafted to give us leave to follow its precepts; and then they only ſpeak of it indifferently, as they would do of a novel, inſtead of telling us it ought to be the rule of all our actions, and that we cannot be happy without it.

Prejudiced thus by our own malice, a bad education, and ill example, it is no wonder if we make nature give place to opinion; whereas if we ſaw all things in the light wherein religion has placed them, it is not probable we ſhould be ſo much our own enemies, as groſsly to contribute to our own undoing, by the wretched abuſe of pleaſures we may every day behold.

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hold. The wiſe heathens deſired no guide but nature, being perſuaded that the happineſs of this life conſiſted in obeying her dictates; but nature never clearly appear'd to them, ſhe was always darken'd by ſin and prejudices, and the vices of each particular countrey.

But we who have ſeen, and clearly beheld nature in her Great Author, and who, enlighten'd by him, have pierced thro' the veil that clouded it; we, who have ſuch excellent precepts, who profeſs ſo holy a religion, are yet worſe than the very heathens; we are deaf to the divine word, that celeſtial ray does not open our underſtanding, it is ſo wretchedly darken'd by the falſe illuſion of riches and honours; in a word, we diſregard thoſe divine rules, which would inſtruct us how to moderate our paſſions, and to diſtinguiſh good from evil; we embrace our ruin, and abuſe the good things God has given us for refreſhment, by uſing them to exceſs; but pleaſure is not to be condemned, becauſe ſome make an ill uſe of it; for religion itſelf is often abuſed, and every thing that is holy. We may enjoy pleaſure to a certain degree, which religion will ſhew us when

when we are arrived at it: Now if there is no merit in a moderate uſe of pleaſure, there certainly is no ſin in it; and if there is a great deal of glory in abſtaining entirely from it, ſurely there is a little praiſe due to thoſe who do not abuſe it.

Now having juſtified pleaſures in general, it is time to come to particulars. It is time I think to part, ſays *Patru*'s diſciple, you take ſo much pleaſure in hearing your ſelves diſpute, that you don't conſider how late it is; tho' I have heard you both with the greateſt pleaſure in the world, yet I muſt remind you of it, becauſe I have obſerved one of the friars that belongs to this houſe walking backwards and forwards, as if he wanted us to go out, but was unwilling to interrupt you; I know he wants to ſhut the gates.

You are in the right, ſays *Patru*, we muſt ſuſpend this converſation 'till to-morrow, if Mr. *D'Ablancourt* pleaſes: With all my heart, ſays he, I did deſign to have invited you to ſup with me, but my melons and ſtrawberries are not for you to eat, they might injure ſo rigid an anchoret, therefore I will take care not to trouble ſo good a conſcience: It would do me

no harm at all, ſays *Patru*, I ſhould eat with moderation, and that in my own opinion would do me no injury.

They went home together, and ſpent the evening gayly, and appointed the next day to finiſh the diſpute, when they took their evening walk.

DIA-

DIALOGUES

BETWEEN

Patru and *D'Ablancourt*

CONCERNING

PLEASURES.

The Second DIALOGUE.

THE next day *Patru* happen'd to have ſome buſineſs that called him out before the hour of aſſignation: he left his diſciple at his houſe, and deſir'd him to tell *D'Ablancourt* the occaſion of his going out, and that when he had finiſh'd his buſineſs he would meet them at the *Tuilleries* near the amphitheatre.

phitheatre. When *D'Ablancourt* came to call his friend, the young gentleman gave him this account, and they went together to the *Tuilleries*, where they ſoon diſcover'd *Patru*, ſitting in a retired part upon the graſs, in the midſt of a moſt beautiful proſpect.

See (ſays *D'Ablancourt*) when he came up to him, how naturally we purſue pleaſure, without being ſenſible of it; for you have choſe the ſweeteſt proſpect in all *Paris*; a thouſand beauties ſurround you, which muſt afford an exquiſite delight. Theſe ſort of pleaſures, ſays *Patru*, are not of the nature of thoſe I condemn: theſe trees, theſe walks, theſe flowers, theſe graſs-plats, inſpire pleaſing and agreeable thoughts, but no dangerous or wicked ones: theſe pleaſures I allow of, they increaſe devotion, and fill us with adoration of our great Creator, who continually diſplays to us ſuch wonderful beauties.

That might be, ſays *D'Ablancourt*, if we ſaw nothing but trees and flowers; but we likewiſe ſee a great number of handſome perſons of both ſexes, who come on purpoſe to give and receive pleaſure:

ſure: this multitude of amiable people, added to this beautiful proſpect, the fine cloaths and magnificent equipages, would be enough to make ſuch a hermit afraid of being corrupted, who holds, that man ought to fear nothing more than man.

'Tis for this reaſon, ſays *Patru*, that I choſe this place, and retired from thoſe agreeable and from thoſe impertinent people; but pray ſit down by me, and continue your defence of pleaſures. Then, ſays *D'Ablancourt* (ſitting down) we muſt examine them one by one, and try if we cannot find ſome that we may ſafely enjoy. I deſign to follow you ſtep by ſtep, and therefore will begin with love as you have done.

Upon my word I have admired you extreamly upon this head, but what has prevailed with you to declaim ſo terribly againſt ſo ſweet a pleaſure? for my part, at the ſame time that your wit charmed me upon that ſubject, your rigour made me tremble at every deſcription of it. I hardly knew you; ſurely it was not Mr. *Patru* that thus condemned love; did I rightly underſtand him? indeed you who have been ſo well treated by *Cupid*, are guilty of great injuſtice thus to condemn

him; but you have confirm'd me in the opinion, that whatever complaints are made againſt him, much fewer of his ſubjects are unhappy than ungrateful. You have been often bound in his ſofteſt chains, and have many a time ſacrificed to *Venus*, and the graces; and this peruke, which you modeſtly call only falſe hair, do you remember the firſt occaſion of your wearing it?

But beſides your ingratitude, there is a great deal of raſhneſs in your undertaking; for *Cupid* is a malicious revengeful God, and if he thinks we are yet worthy of his vengeance, he may before you go from hence pour it upon you; but I fear our time is paſt; your peruke indeed would ſay ſomething for you, did not the caul that cover'd it ſpoil all; the graces fly ſmiling from you at the ſight of this comical medly, to puniſh you for your declamation.

What you ſaid was very well; but you ought to not be ſo witty upon this occaſion: it would have been much more gallant to have fail'd in this point: but alas! we are now better qualified to rail at love, than to be ſenſible of his power; you begin by accuſing love of extravagance, and you bring

bring philoſophy to aid religion againſt it. You have given us examples of what you call amorous follies, but thoſe follies are very agreeable in ſuch commerces: how pleaſant would it be to hear any body make love in a ſerious manner, without life or ſpirit, with a rigid compoſed countenance! Would not this be one of the greateſt follies in the world? ſurely what you talked of is much more ſupportable; and if people keep within bounds, they may with impunity be merry and amorous; if we were to regard every thing with the eyes of wiſdom, we ſhould find abundance of mens actions very ſilly that appear the moſt ſerious. We often gravely commit the greateſt follies, and if we ſhould ſtrictly examine all our actions, we ſhould find ourſelves like children, who buſy themſelves with the utmoſt application to build houſes of cards.

But believe me, if we ſpeak rightly, love is folly only among fools; and, if I may be allowed to ſay ſo, 'tis rather a vice of the mind than of the heart; but if I ſhould agree with you that there is weakneſs and folly in it, it does not thence follow that it is criminal, which is our preſent queſtion.

You accuſe it of impiety and idolatry, and, by your diſcourſe, one would believe you much more credulous than the ladies; for I believe the vaineſt of them never took theſe praiſes and adorations in earneſt: theſe are falſe diamonds, which every one knows the value of; and none imagine themſelves to be real Goddeſſes becauſe they are called ſo by their lovers; but this ſort of nonſenſical diſcourſe is now very much out of faſhion, and love has quitted the language of *Parnaſſus* for that of the court, and nature; ladies now content themſelves with their lovers giving an account of the pains and pleaſures they feel, or ſometimes thoſe they do not feel when their love is feign'd.

The next thing you declaim againſt is adultery, and thoſe other vile debaucheries, which produce yet more ſhameful effects. I deteſt and abhor theſe vices as much as you do, tho' I do not condemn love in general; becauſe I believe there are other pleaſures in it which we may innocently enjoy; and this I hope to convince you of. The impreſſion beauty makes upon us, the agreeable ſenſations we feel at the ſight of thoſe who are lovely,

are ſentiments that nature in her purity inſpired; God imprinted them in the heart of man from the beginning, and he adorned *Eve* with all the graces we can poſſibly imagine, in order to captivate her husband's heart.

For as beauty is the ſupreme exteriour perfection of the female ſex, and as *Eve* came perfect out of God's hands, we may imagine her to have been more beautiful than any other woman ever was, or can poſſibly be. I believe her beauty the more perfect, becauſe it was not at firſt ſullied by any rebellious paſſions, as all have been ſince the fall. We may obſerve the injuries theſe paſſions do to beauty, by thoſe who are given to melancholy, anger, or any violent paſſions; we ſee they by degrees take off the brightneſs of the eyes, the beauty of the complexion, and quite alter the air of the face.

I cannot believe God Almighty adorn'd the fair ſex with ſo many charms for nothing, or that he only gave them for a ſnare to us: No! he certainly deſign'd we ſhould be ſenſible of thoſe charms, and that our hearts ſhould be touch'd by them; therefore, never tell me this pleaſure ſhould

only affect our ſight, tho' I own to you it ſometimes goes no farther: the admiration that the charms of beauty creates in us, is not only a pleaſure to the heart and ſenſes; it ſometimes pleaſes and charms the mind, and is the effect of a fine underſtanding: a woman may feel this pleaſure at the ſight of another woman, who is extreamly beautiful: we then behold beauty as we do fine flowers, and we are ſenſible that there are none of the works of nature that are more wonderful or more charming than beauty, and that the moſt agreeable proſpect below the skies is a circle of fine women.

But I affirm, that nature did not deſign to limit us to the light ſuperficial pleaſures of ſight; ſhe deſign'd our hearts ſhould be ſoften'd and mov'd by beauty; for pray conſider the circumſtances of *Eve*'s creation, and the manner of *Adam*'s receiving her; he had been dumb to all the liberal gifts of God; but the moment he beheld her he diſcover'd the lively impreſſion ſhe had made upon him; he immediately cried out, *She was half of himſelf, and that a man ſhould leave father and mother and cleave to his wife.* He

ſhew'd that the ſight of this woman had pierc'd into his ſoul; and from thence we may eaſily conclude, that the impreſſion beauty makes is not limited to the eyes; and that the emotion it cauſes in the heart proceeds from pure nature.

And certainly God has given theſe charms to women for no other end but to form the union of ſexes, to draw man to the ſociety he deſign'd him for. Now this ſweet emotion the heart feels at the ſight of a beautiful object, is the birth of love; ſo that this paſſion is firſt the foundation of the bands of human ſociety, and ſecondly, being one of the ſentiments that nature in her purity inſpired, it never can be a guilty paſſion unleſs we abuſe it, or apply it to criminal objects, ſuch as you and I both condemn.

For this tender emotion (which I have already ſaid is the origin and firſt ſentiment of love) is ſomething extreamly ſweet and innocent, that penetrates to the bottom of the heart, and ſweetly inſinuates itſelf in the moſt pleaſing manner; and when the perſon who has given the firſt wound is ſenſible of the ſame love ſhe has inſpired into her lover, and there is a mu-

a mutual tenderneſs between them, it produces the moſt delightful commerce in the world, it gives pleaſures that reſult from the union of hearts, without the leaſt mixture of ſenſuality.

I perceive, ſays *Patru* ſmiling, that the love you admit is all refin'd and ſpiritual; it is a tenderneſs ſo pure that the body has no ſhare in it. I ſee what you aim at: you would ſpiritualize love to render it innocent: others have attempted it like you; but reaſon, nature, and experience reſiſt the eſtabliſhment of this fine chimera: there is as much reality in this pure love as in the ſtories of monſters and caſtles in the air, built by the power of magick. I agree with you that we might love in this manner if we were pure ſpirits; but by misfortune we have bodies, and when we love, we love both with ſoul and body; we deſire to poſſeſs what we love, and cannot tell how to ſubſiſt without it; and love without enjoyment goes out of courſe, like fire for want of ſupply.

Yes, ſays *D'Ablancourt*, this is the notion that is generally conceived of love; but pray explain a few things to me that

ſeem

ſeem not to agree with this idea, nor with your definition of love: you call love a deſire of enjoyment, from whence then proceeds that looſe deſire in abundance of people, who are fix'd to no ſettled object; do you call this deſire of love, which is the mark and ſource of luſt and debauchery.

That famous Empreſs was one of this number, who deſcended from her throne to take up with the meaneſt ſtranger; do you think this deſerves the name of love? yet never was the deſire you mention more violent in any, nor did ever any give a greater looſe to it.

But from whence proceeds the imagination that love naturally goes out without enjoyment? whereas it is generally thought nothing extinguiſhes it ſo ſoon as fruition, ſo that love muſt be quite different from what you imagine, and is in reality only the union of hearts; and to make you more fully ſenſible of this, I muſt tell you, there are people in the world, who, when they could not gain the affections of thoſe they loved, have renounced the poſſeſſion of their perſons.

When I was a young man, I was intimately acquainted with a gentleman who was

was violently in love with a very beautiful young lady, but becauſe ſhe had no inclination for him, he abſolutely refuſed to marry her, though it was in his power to have done it: he was a man of too much honour and delicacy to make uſe of the deference and obedience ſhe paid her Parents, who would have obliged her to marry him; but he (being afraid of making both her and himſelf unhappy by ſuch a union) took holy orders in your church. He was a man of great merit, and ſince he could not gain the heart of one he ſo paſſionately loved, he reſolved no other earthly object ſhould ever employ his thoughts, and therefore changed his paſſion, and dedicated himſelf entirely to religion.

I have known others who have married women they loved, and yet have thought themſelves very unhappy, by believing they were not beloved again; they have continually ſigh'd for their hearts, and have thought the poſſeſſion of their perſons a misfortune without the heart: Now certainly none of theſe people ever thought the pleaſures of love conſiſted in poſſeſſion only.

There

There have been men in all ages who have been deſperately in love with women, whoſe birth, virtue, and fortune could give them no hopes of ever enjoying them, and yet their paſſion render'd them in ſome degree happy; they contented themſelves with ſpeaking to them, or at leaſt with ſeeing or hearing them ſpeak, and with breathing in the ſame air with them.

In our provinces, where they follow nature without art, the young people love one another for many years, and live together with ſuch ſweetneſs and felicity as deſerves our envy, without receiving any other favours, or having any other pretenſions than loving for the ſake of being loved.

If all thoſe who have loved in their tender youth would declare the ſentiments they had then, we ſhould find, that in that age of innocence they had no deſires but to ſee one another, to love and to talk of their paſſion to the object of it.

Perhaps you may think me very ſilly; but I cannot help ſpeaking here of my ſelf; I own I have loved, and in my firſt paſſion (which was my only true and ſincere

cere one, or at leaſt the tendereſt I ever felt) I had no ſettled deſign or proſpect: I lov'd, and all I wiſh'd for was, to be beloved: I was ſo, and I deſir'd nothing more; and my happineſs was ſuch, that I have all my life ſince regretted the loſs of thoſe dear delightful hours.

The perſon I loved was a girl of great wiſdom and virtue; I admired her for thoſe perfections, and for her ſake my heart ſeemed to delight in wiſdom; and I muſt here obſerve, that vice is, if I may uſe the expreſſion, ſo ſurprized and terrified by the ſecret effects, and by the ſight of virtue, that it never dares openly declare itſelf before a virtuous woman; and vicious deſires ſeldom riſe but in the company of thoſe who by their manners, or the courſe of their lives, give room for their lovers to hope for all favours.

Pray conſider the charms of friendſhip; our ſentiments muſt be very exalted to reliſh it to a high degree; it is an infinite pleaſure, and yet the ſenſes bear no part in it. Now if the union of hearts can give ſuch exquiſite pleaſures in friendſhip, without the participation of the body, why may we not conceive as great pleaſures from

from the union of hearts in love? for benevolence reigns in both, only with this difference, that the benevolence lovers feel is ſo lively and tender, that it makes that of friendſhip appear dull and languid to it.

If then this deſire of poſſeſſion, in which you ſay love conſiſts, can preſide in a perſon who has no tenderneſs; and if, on the other hand, a full enjoyment cannot ſatisfy, without the poſſeſſion of the heart; if, in fine, love can continue without poſſeſſion or deſire, we may from all this conclude, that love, properly ſpeaking, does not conſiſt in one or the other, but in the union of hearts, or at leaſt you muſt own, that it is poſſible to ſtop there, and have no farther views; and that conſequently ſo pure a love is far from a chimera, for there is nothing more true and natural.

And it is really doing great injuſtice to human nature, to believe it incapable of this ſort of love; it is judging very wrong of our hearts, and the ſentiments they may produce. This error I believe proceeds from our not diſtinguiſhing between a groſs inſtinct we have in common with brutes,

brutes, and a tender benevolence that reigns only in the heart; and this error is ſtill augmented for want of duly conſidering the tender emotion that beauty excites in us, and which the charms of converſation and beauties of the mind preſerve and encreaſe.

The ſort of love I ſpeak of is a continual ſource of delight to people of merit; 'tis ſo charming a commerce nothing can equal it: What pleaſure is there in beholding thoſe we love? in meeting them unexpectedly, when our whole thoughts (as to earthly things) are fix'd upon them? or to be always in their company, and deſire no other converſation? Do you think it no pleaſure to be ſenſible that you give delight to one you love beyond your ſelf? Is it nothing to have your eyes fix'd whole days upon a lovely perſon, and to be alone with her many hours together? Whatever you may ſay, the ſweeteſt air we breathe is near beautiful lips; in fine, the leaſt trifles give us exquiſite pleaſure: a look, a ſmile, enchants us; a glance of the eye, the little inquietudes, the moſt trifling diſcourſe, the tranſports of joy; all and every thing gives delight in love,

even

even ſighs and tears affect us with an inexpreſſible pleaſure, mix'd with a ſoft concern.

But in my opinion, one of the greateſt pleaſures of love is to contemplate and admire the beauties of the mind of the beloved perſon; how ſweet is it daily to diſcover new ones, and to make them happy by your praiſes? Theſe are pleaſures that become a noble mind: doubtleſs it is a happineſs to be poſſeſs'd of excellent qualities, and it is likewiſe one to be capable of diſcovering perfections in others, and to have a mind generous enough to talk of and publiſh them, and to place them in the cleareſt light: This ſhews ſome degree of merit; for unleſs you have merit in your ſelf, you can never diſcover it in others; and none but a noble mind can take a pleaſure in publiſhing the perfections of others, or in making others happy and pleaſed with themſelves.

Though theſe are not delights that gratify the ſenſes, yet they muſt be very groſs and ſelfiſh that deny theſe to be exquiſite pleaſures; for in my opinion the pleaſures of the mind are the greateſt we

can feel: and our moſt dear and ſweeteſt ſentiments are thoſe, which when once conceiv'd we can entertain ourſelves with alone, without the aſſiſtance of exterior objects.

We feel all other delights no longer than while we actually enjoy them; for example, muſick and delicacies pleaſe us only while the feaſt or concert continues: in like manner the pleaſures of gaming and converſation conclude when the company breaks up; and the reaſon is, becauſe theſe kinds of pleaſures are not within us, but proceed from exterior objects; we have only in ourſelves a diſpoſition to reliſh them, but we cannot enjoy them without eating, playing, going into company, or hearing fine muſick.

Love when it is once fix'd needs none of theſe aids, it works in us, and becomes a part of us; it is ſo inſeparable from us, that if we are ever ſo far removed from the object of it, it ſtill remains with us, and gives us joy unſpeakable; for it is the lively emotion and tenderneſs of the heart which creates this happineſs, and theſe ſweet ſenſations always remain in us; we carry theſe delights wherever fate conducts us.

Though

Though all I have ſaid is true and natural, I am afraid it has appeared obſcure, and that I have not made myſelf thoroughly underſtood; there are ſome ſentiments we can much better feel than explain, but I believe you can aſſiſt me in explaining my meaning. I began this diſpute only for an amuſement, and I depend much upon your penetration to underſtand me right; and as it was only undertaken to employ a few leiſure hours, I hope you will have the good nature not to criticiſe upon the words, if you but underſtand what they aim at.

Now I can hardly believe any body will pretend to condemn ſo pure a love as I have deſigned to deſcribe, or that any can think thoſe pleaſures we feel within ourſelves, thoſe ſentiments ſo free from all impurity, are not entirely innocent: Can there be any caſuiſt that will think love criminal, when it is reduced to the pure union of ſouls.

I think we ſhould be ſo far from condemning it, that we ſhould endeavour to inſpire it into all who think of marrying; for we ſee thoſe engagements often prove unhappy for want of love; people gene-

rally marry either for money, or in obedience to parents, or for ſome politick motive, without the union of minds; from hence proceed the miſunderſtandings, domeſtick quarrels, the miſeries, divorces, adulteries, and a thouſand inconveniences that we daily ſee attend marriage. A little love before would remedy all this; for it is a dangerous experiment to expect it will come afterwards, we have but few examples of it, and doubtleſs it was for this reaſon that the church formerly ordain'd, that thoſe who were betroth'd ſhould live ſome time together before they married, that by conſtantly ſeeing one another, and by converſing together, a mutual love, ſuch a ſweet inclination as I have deſcribed, might grow between them; ſo that this refined tenderneſs is not only lawful, but Chriſtianity does not even forbid the deſire of enjoyment, provided the perſons deſign marriage; even thoſe deſires are lawful when they tend to a lawful end.

Sure there are no criticks ſo whimſical to deny that a man may find pleaſures in the enjoyment of a wife; if ſhe is a handſome woman that does not make her leſs

ſo;

ſo; and however you may condemn pleaſures, theſe are certainly laudable ones.

I ſhould think a man muſt find vaſtly greater delight in a wife than a miſtreſs; for it muſt ſurely be an addition to our happineſs, when we can juſtly eſteem the perſon we love for her modeſty and merit. As you have obſerved, nothing raiſes our deſires like modeſty, there is a prodigious charm in the bluſh of a beautiful woman; and what adds yet more to the delights and felicities of marriage is, that they are lawful and innocent, allowed and approved of by God and man; and certainly the greateſt felicity we can enjoy is to be happy and innocent, free from all guilt and remorſe.

Now beſides the reaſons I have already given, to prove that love is innocent when confin'd to innocent and lawful objects, I can bring you many examples to evince what I have ſaid: What love had *David* for *Abigail?* what did he not do for *Saul's* daughter, with whom he was exceedingly enamour'd? how great was *Jacob's* love and tenderneſs? where can we find ſuch an example in hiſtory, as the holy Scripture gives us of this Patriarch's paſſion for *Rachel.*

The moment he ſaw her he was ſeized with a paſſion he could not conceal nor reſtrain; he ran with open arms to embrace her, and the tears fell down his cheeks; his ſurprize and concern were ſo great that he kiſs'd her before he told her who he was; as ſoon as he came to *Laban* he freely offer'd to ſerve him, being well pleaſed to live upon any terms in the ſame houſe with *Rachel*; when *Laban* ask'd what he ſhould give him for his ſervice, he ſaid he deſired no recompence but *Rachel*, and if he would grant him her he would ſerve him ſeven years: he afterwards you know ſerved ſeven more, and was conſtantly expoſed to heat and cold, and the inclemency of different ſeaſons; but all fatigues appear'd ſweet and eaſy, and it is ſaid that the violence of his love made the time ſeem very ſhort to him.

When he return'd with all his family to *Iſaac* his father, having heard that *Eſau*, whoſe cruelty and hatred he fear'd, was coming towards him, his firſt care was for *Rachel*; oh, ſays he, when he ſpoke of *Eſau*, he will deſtroy the mother and her children! He then divided his family into three parts, and placed them at ſome diſtance

diſtance from one another; he put his other wives and their children in the two firſt, and *Rachel* with her ſon in the laſt; and he then ſaid, if *Eſau* ſlay the two firſt, he will ſurely leave me *Rachel.* When *Rachel* died, as ſoon as he had performed the laſt duties to her, he immediately left the place where he had always lived with her, being no longer able to continue where he had loſt all that was dear to him; his whole life time he preſerv'd a tender regard for her memory, he lov'd her in her ſons, and ſhew'd a thouſand particular marks of his affection to them more than to his other children: When he heard that the eldeſt of them was devoured, he wept, and ſaid, the cruel beaſt has killed my ſon, *Joſeph* is dead, but I will go down into the grave mourning for my ſon: Thus he wept many days, he rent his cloaths, girded his loins with ſackcloth, and refuſed to be comforted.

When *Jacob* was dying he mentioned *Rachel* in ſuch a manner, as ſhewed ſhe had been conſtantly in his thoughts, and that he loved her to his lateſt gaſp; ſurely never any paſſion exceeded this!

Now Sir I agree with you, that all debauchery and criminal affections are unworthy a Chriſtian; and I own that enjoyment, in which you ſay love conſiſts, is unlawful without marriage; and if there were no other ſort of love, I would not diſpute one moment with you upon this head; but as I have ſhewed you, there are other pleaſures in love beſides enjoyment, and infinite ones too, full of ſweetneſs and innocence: It is very poſſible to confine ourſelves to them; and as we ſometimes do it out of honour and delicacy, why may we not do it for conſcience ſake?

But in ſome caſes religion allows the deſire of poſſeſſion, and poſſeſſion itſelf, and what can be deſired more; it does not indeed allow debauchery, but thereby we are freed from the trouble and remorſe that attends it; and I think we cannot be too thankful to religion, for forbidding us the uſe of thoſe things that would be hurtful to us, and tend to our deſtruction.

I think I have offered reaſons enough to convince you of the lawfulneſs of love, and yet you may plainly perceive I have neither invoked *Venus* nor the *Graces*. I thought

thought at my age 'twould be in vain to implore their aſſiſtance.

I can tell you, ſays *Patru* ſmiling, if you did not invoke them, they came freely to your aſſiſtance; for I ſaw them during all your diſcourſe, and wit and reaſon accompanied them, but I will not compliment you; your reproaching me for my wearing a caul ſticks too much in my ſtomach to ſuffer me to ſay any obliging things to you.

You are a true flatterer, ſays *D'Ablancourt*, but let us now talk of luxury or delicacies; the law as well as religion ought by penalties to ſuppreſs the exceſſes you have talk'd of in eating and drinking; theſe people ought to be put upon the level with footmen and porters; for in my opinion 'tis the manners and inclinations that diſtinguiſh men, more than their fortunes, and there are many lacqueys who do not wear liveries.

All thoſe perſons have not only loſt the uſe of their reaſon, ſenſe and religion, but even of their palate; for what true pleaſure can there be in thoſe outrageous debaucheries, that diſorder the mind and health; thoſe people indeed eat a great deal, but they

they can never eat agreeably, becauſe ſuch vaſt exceſs muſt render every thing inſipid to them: But when we have retrench'd pride, anger and paſſion, exceſſive expences, and exceſs in eating and drinking, pray what can you ſay againſt the reſt? It is I think impoſſible to avoid ſometimes eating with pleaſure, if we are in health: You ſay a Chriſtian ought only to eat out of neceſſity, without finding any reliſh in it, pray how can this be, unleſs you had a palate and throat of braſs?

For the greateſt pleaſure we find in eating is, when we are hungry, then let meat be ever ſo indifferent we have a good reliſh for it: a good appetite makes every thing taſte deliciouſly, ſo that the method you preſcribe is the beſt in the world to make us take a pleaſure in eating.

Then you add, that a Chriſtian ought to confine himſelf to the moſt indifferent meats, delicacies you ſay are not for Chriſtians: what? are they only made for infidels? upon my word then they have a fine time of it; and it is certainly a mighty juſt way of thinking to believe, that only thoſe who moſt offend God ſhall enjoy his bleſſings.

Good

Good God! what pity it is that any ſhould pretend to preach ſuch morals! there is nothing but what they will think fit to damn the world for: Now theſe men never reflect that by this ſeverity they condemn the government and goodneſs of God: For God has not only ſaid, that it is not what goes into us that defiles the man; but after the flood ſeeing that fruit, herbs and roots (which is the diet you preſcribe) was not ſufficient for our nouriſhment, becauſe the vertue of them was either leſſen'd by the waters, or ſome other reaſon; he then permitted man to eat every thing that had life: Now according to our preacher what number of patriarchs and ſaints are damn'd, who made no ſcruple of eating fat veal and lamb, and the beſt of all their flocks.

But pray, Mr. Director, tell me if it is a ſin to eat melons or ſtrawberries, or green peaſe? I cannot believe you can ſay it is, becauſe theſe are vegetables, which you allow the uſe of; now there is nothing more agreeable to the palate than theſe things are, ſo that you muſt either forbid the uſe of them, or allow that the pleaſures of eating and drinking are not unlawful,

lawful, provided we keep within due bounds. You ſay a Chriſtian ought not to think about eating; well, but muſt not he think while he is eating? muſt he diveſt himſelf of all his ſenſes? and if by accident he ſhould be obliged to be at a fine entertainment, muſt he eat a partridge as if it were a ſtone, or a fine ſoop like lentile pottage?

This would be a greater ſign of want of palate than of religion, and ſuch a perſon would be more like a blockhead than a good Chriſtian.

Brutes perhaps may eat in this manner; they groſly and greedily ſatisfy their brutal appetites; but man is a more noble being, and ought at all times to differ from them, and to act like himſelf at table, as well as at other times; there is ſomething of nobleneſs in his nature, that diſtinguiſhes him even in thoſe things that he does in common with brutes; for that delicacy of taſte is rather an effect of his human nature than a blameable ſenſuality.

I have often had the honour to eat with the Prince of *Conde*, whoſe table was always ſerv'd in a nice as well as princely manner;

manner: I have likewiſe eat with Monſieur *Colligni*, and many other Noblemen; but my greateſt pleaſure then was, in diſcourſing with a Prince who was as charming in converſation as he was dreadful to his enemies in battle: I ſay my chief pleaſure was in the agreeable converſation of thoſe who deſerv'd much leſs to be honour'd for their titles and noble blood, than for the greatneſs of their mind and extenſiveneſs of their wit; but yet I not only heard fine or witty diſcourſes, but I likewiſe eat delicacies; and now pray do you really believe that I hazarded my ſalvation by having admired the plenty and magnificence, and delicacy of the entertainments, or by taking a pleaſure in obſerving them?

I have already ſaid that our Saviour made no ſcruple of going to feaſts with his diſciples, and a great many holy men have done the ſame: *Iſaac* loved *Eſau* better than *Jacob* (tho' *Jacob* was much the more amiable) becauſe the Scripture tells us *Eſau* loved hunting, and would kill and bring his father veniſon: Do you think *Iſaac* was intemperate becauſe he lik'd veniſon better than mutton? No certainly; it is no ſign of intemperance to like

like one meat better than another, nor to diſtinguiſh the moſt delicious from the common ſort; it only ſhews diſcernment, and a good taſte: intemperance conſiſts in being over-ſolicitous about eating, in impatiently, and eagerly ſeeking after delicacies, not bearing to go without them, and in eating and drinking to vaſt exceſs, and with greedineſs.

You ſee now that we may take ſome ſatisfaction in eating, and that 'tis impoſſible for people in health to eat without it; you ſee it is likewiſe not unlawful to eat delicacies, provided we eat not to exceſs, or with greedineſs; if we avoid that, we may freely enjoy what God has given us for the comfort and ſupport of life; nay, I will venture to affirm, that elegance and neatneſs at our meals is not blameable, if it proceeds from a delicacy and niceneſs of judgment, and not from vanity and epicuriſm; for there are people in the world to whom politeneſs and a genteel ſpirit is ſo natural, that it ſhews itſelf upon all occaſions; and this politeneſs is certainly innocent in the ſight of God and man, and none but ſavages will pretend to ſay, that what is ſo becoming an ornament

ment to a gentleman, can be unbecoming a Chriſtian.

The pleaſures of the table being thus reduc'd, are certainly very agreeable, and cannot juſtly merit your cenſure; for it is a neceſſary entertainment, ſometimes in the courſe of our lives, not only to regain our ſtrength, which living upon vegetables muſt impair, but likewiſe to keep up a friendſhip and commerce with mankind, which eating together is one of the beſt methods of improving. People converſe at meals with the greateſt freedom; their hearts are open, and friendſhips are often begun at table that prove very firm and laſting, and produce union, peace, and concord, which are the fundamentals of charity; let us, therefore, enjoy the bleſſings God ſo liberally beſtows upon us, and let us keep within the bounds of moderation by him preſcrib'd; let us not greedily ſeek after delicacies, but let us not refuſe them if by accident we meet with them, or if the greatneſs of our fortunes or our ſtations in the world offer them to us; virtue and piety does not properly conſiſt in diet; the mirth that generally accompanies well-regulated entertainments can never offend God,

God, ſince he has provided our food, and expects our gratitude and thankfulneſs for the bleſſings he ſo bountifully heaps upon us.

If a Prince ſhould invite two men to his table, and one of them ſhould eat and drink to gluttony and drunkenneſs, without ſhewing any regard to the company, the Prince would certainly be full of indignation againſt him, and think him an ungrateful brute, without the leaſt acknowledgment to his benefactor; and if the other ſeem'd to eat with a pleaſure and ſatisfaction, that expreſs'd a juſt ſenſe of the Prince's favour; if he eat the good things provided for him with a grateful acknowledgment of the liberality and generoſity of the giver, the Prince could not be diſpleaſed with ſuch ſentiments, but would certainly approve of his behaviour better than if he had ſat and not taſted of the dinner he was invited to.

Now all nature is a feaſt, to which God invites us with an inexhauſtible goodneſs; he bids us eat and drink, and tells us he has given us what will pleaſe our taſte; and he has given us laws to inſtruct us to avoid exceſs; *Therefore*, ſays he, *enjoy the one*

one and avoid the other, and when you partake of my bounty always remember the author of it. Now if we do thus, and with pleaſure enjoy the bleſſings of life, do you think we can offend God by it, if we continually bleſs and praiſe him for his infinite goodneſs.

Uſing the bleſſings of life with a conſtant inward and outward acknowledgment of his immenſe goodneſs, appears to me ſo noble and juſt a ſentiment, that I can hardly believe ſelf-denial and mortification to be greater virtues; it is a ſentiment becoming true Chriſtian piety: the *Jews* had no notion of this gratitude; none but Chriſtians are ſenſible of ſo ſublime a pleaſure; their chief happineſs conſiſts in the conſideration that it is God who beſtows all bleſſings upon them, and the joy that flows from that conſideration gives a thouſand times more laſting pleaſure than can poſſibly proceed from bare eating and drinking.

If a good man keeps a handſome table, and entertains the unfortunate, feeds the hungry, cloathes the naked, and does a great deal of good in the world; if he ſometimes takes a pleaſure in entertaining

his friends and relations, and with ſerenity and true peace of mind ſatisfies the deſires of nature, and with pleaſure eats of the greateſt delicacies, and enjoys his friends with an innocent mirth and chearfulneſs. If this man in true innocence, and full of grateful acknowledgment for God's bleſſings and admiration of his goodneſs, ſhould take ſome pleaſure in the enjoyment of theſe benefits, do you think he would deſerve blame or praiſe? Believe me, ſuch a man might with impunity ſip Nectar and Ambroſia.

Now if we add muſick to ſuch innocent and agreeable entertainments, ſure no body can condemn it but ſuch ſages as Mr. *Patru*, who fly from the ſound of all the concerts in the neighbourhood, or thoſe who, like the brutiſh King you ſpoke of, had rather hear the neighing of horſes than the fineſt muſick.

I could in the favour of muſick alledge, that it is as ancient as the world itſelf, and that it was made uſe of in a ſeaſon when men were unacquainted with all pleaſures but what were natural and innocent. But not to enter into theſe curious enquiries, I will content my ſelf with ſaying, that

voices, lutes, and other inſtruments have always been thought proper for the improvement of religion, and the glorification of God: The *Jews* had muſick in their tabernacles before they had any churches.

You have well obſerved, that the ſound of inſtruments in ancient times inſpired the Prophets with the Spirit of prophecy; it fill'd them with the divine Spirit, and tranſported them even out of themſelves. *Solomon* had ſuch a number of inſtruments and muſicians in his temple that they almoſt exceed all belief.

And ſince thoſe days Chriſtians have admitted muſick into their churches; and from the beginning of Chriſtianity, voices, lutes, and organs have celebrated the praiſes of Jeſus Chriſt; and they ſeem as ſo many tongues, which tranſport the vows and prayers of the faithful to the ears of their God.

This cuſtom, which I have ſhewed you the progreſs of, is ſufficient to convince you of the lawfulneſs and innocence of muſick; for if it was not ſo it would never be made uſe of for divine myſteries, and in ſuch holy places; and for what

reaſon would you make it change its nature at all other times, and of a ſudden become criminal every where elſe? And I beſeech you, what hurt can that ſort of muſick do religion or conſcience, which often ſtrikes the ear without affecting the mind, as lutes and other inſtruments ſometimes do. For my part, the more I think of it I am the leſs able to comprehend how any thing that contributes to the exerciſe of piety and religion, can poſſibly corrupt our manners.

Harmony is a pleaſure God Almighty gives us almoſt in every part of nature: I do not ſpeak to you of the muſick of the Spheres, for I own to you I could never hear it; ſome people, however, who have nicer ears, have told us wonders of it; but without troubling our ſelves about it, let us conſider the voice of man; what ſweetneſs and harmony is there in it! the ſound of inſtruments is but an imperfect imitation of it; there is not a nation in the world but what delights in ſinging, and has ſome ſort of muſick peculiar to it.

What can be more delightful than the ſinging of birds; the difference of their

notes ſo beautifully varied make the ſweeteſt concert in the world, which no art can equal, and we can never too much admire; in fine, nature ſupplies me with ſufficient proofs of all I advance; for it affords us pleaſures, and means to juſtify the uſe of them: But to ſpeak the truth, muſick is one of thoſe diverſions of which we can be much more able to feel within ourſelves its innocence, than to demonſtrate it by clear and unqueſtionable proofs, and by endeavouring to demonſtrate it, we make it only the more obſcure: What I think adds to the delight of muſick is, that there is nothing more frequent nor eaſy, eſpecially vocal muſick: You meet it every where, in cities and in the country; a man that has a good voice is acceptable in all places; for muſick has ſo near an affinity to the nature of the ſoul, that hardly any are inſenſible of its power. We require company to make us reliſh other pleaſures highly; but it is not ſo in this; thoſe who have a good voice can entertain themſelves alone; for you know we can never be more agreeably delighted, nor think any harmony finer than one's own voice, if we ſing well; and it is the

cheapeſt of all pleaſures; it is uſeful as well as agreeable; it ſoftens afflictions, and adds to the happineſs of a proſperous fortune; and it helps to leſſen the weight of ill fortune, by taking the mind off from the reflection of its miſeries.

I am mightily inclined to believe, that muſick can procure us (at leaſt for a time) ſuch a perfect tranquillity as creates the true happineſs of life. And I believe it from this; you know the mind is not eaſy under too great a calm, nor too violent an agitation; but the medium is what we call tranquillity: this, I think, we attain to by the charms of muſick; for in a concert all the uneaſy ſentiments of the ſoul are ſuſpended, becauſe the ſoul is entirely fix'd upon the ſound which delights her ears; and the diverſity of ſounds raiſes ſuch different emotions in her, as keeps her from falling into a lethargy or melancholy.

We daily and hourly ſee the troubles of the mind becalm'd by muſick: *David* with his lyre appeaſed *Saul*'s rage, and calm'd his mind; one would think the dæmon which tormented him was ſoften'd, and loſt his fury by the power of harmony.

I have heard a ſtory of ſome young people, who were coming from a debauch, and went to the houſe of a woman of honour, and reſolved to enter it by force: As they were preparing to break open the door, a gentleman of the neighbourhood ordered an excellent muſician to play a certain tune to them; he did ſo, and it touch'd them in ſo lively a manner, that they ſtopp'd ſhort, and by degrees it ſo calm'd their paſſions, that they went home without executing their deſigns.

This ſtory has always infinitely pleaſed me, and almoſt inclined me to believe the old tales of bears and lions being tamed by the power of muſick; for rage and luſt are in my opinion much more ſavage, and more dangerous monſters, and it is much harder to break them, than lions or bears.

After what I have ſaid, who can with juſtice condemn muſick, which enlarges and improves our devotion, which is ſo eaſy, ſo natural, and ſo cheap, and is of ſuch uſe to mankind, that it gives conſolation in afflictions, ſweetneſs, peace, and happineſs; it calms the paſſions, and is conducive to virtue, by turning us from wicked actions.

You say we ought only to use it for the praises of God; now it certainly is no less agreeable then than at other times, for the pleasure proceeds from the harmony, independent of the subject it is employ'd on; and I think it would be very well if we frequently paid this homage to God Almighty: I never design'd to forbid Christians the pleasures of such heavenly musick, which certainly gives infinitely higher delights to those of an exalted piety, than the people of the world can find in that sort they most delight in.

But we cannot always be singing of anthems; there are times and places where such piety would not be proper, and then we not only may be dispensed from it, but we ought to be so; whereas songs are more suitable on such occasions, and it would be indecent to use any other.

You have likewise reproach'd musick for being soft and effeminate; if it were so I should condemn it as much as you do, because then it would be contrary to religion, and nothing would be more destructive to its art; for I think nothing is more to be despised than that loose sort of musick which lulls one almost asleep,

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without affecting the mind agreeably; but muſick ought to charm the mind, and inſpire ſweetneſs and compaſſion; it ſhould make lively and deep impreſſions on the ſoul; for there are ſome voices and tunes that we admire without being pleaſed with them; it is a great fault in muſick, not to move and affect the ſoul; for it is not enough to ſing to the ear, they ought likewiſe to ſing to the heart; muſick certainly ought not to be looſe nor effeminate, but yet it ſhould be piercing fine and ſweet.

'Tis thus we have been innocently charm'd with the muſick of *Bouſſet Lavigi*, and that other *Italian*, *Lully*, who has ſo excelled in *France*: I don't know if ſuch tunes can corrupt good manners, as you imagine they do, and hinder our ever hearing the muſick of Angels, but I am ſure they always give me an idea of heavenly muſick.

There is nothing effeminate in the manner of theſe great maſters, and yet they always touch the ſoul in a lively manner; they muſt have very little judgment who don't diſtinguiſh between effeminacy and ſweetneſs, or who take a certain harſhneſs and loudneſs for martial noble muſick;

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it is pity but ſuch people ſhould be entertain'd with the *Gothick* concerts, whoſe harmony reſembles the noiſe of crying and ſwearing rather than ſinging.

But you ſay we hear generally infamous ſongs, and the beſt we ever hear only celebrate the fabulous Gods; they treat of *Venus* and *Bacchus*, the graces and divinities.

Now to anſwer this: It is rather a reproach to poetry than muſick; but however, I deſign to defend it in another manner, tho' muſick ſhould not be anſwerable for the abuſes that may be made of it; but you never hear any obſcene ſongs but in the mouth of the rabble, or ſome very great debauchee, who has loſt all ſenſe of virtue and honour; and I cannot believe theſe ſongs do any injury to the virtuous, for they rather excite our indignation than make any ill impreſſions upon us; I am ſure if the Devil makes uſe of no other arts to enſnare me, I ſhall be very able to reſiſt his temptations.

As for the fabulous Gods, I think you judge very raſhly upon this point; are not you afraid of affronting ſuch terrible divinities? how dare you ſhew ſo little reſpect

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to antiquity? you ought to pay them ſome reſpect, if it were only for *Homer*'s ſake, who has celebrated them in works more divine than thoſe Gods themſelves: they have now no longer any temples, and it would be the greateſt barbarity in the world to deprive them of *Parnaſſus*. Can you have the heart to oppoſe their being celebrated in ſongs, or to hinder *Aurora*'s weeping for *Cephalus*, or *Zephir*'s ſighing for *Flora*?

Would you be ſo cruel to drive *Venus* and *Bacchus*, and the *Loves*, from our poetry as well as from our hearts? at leaſt be ſo merciful to leave us the *Graces*, their engaging ingenuous airs can never prejudice our morals; however I'll content myſelf with thoſe that hide themſelves ſo artfully, that we feel their power before we ſee them; now I defy you to baniſh theſe from your diſcourſes and writings, for, ſays he ſmiling, I muſt endeavour to repair the affront put upon your peruke.

Now, ſays Mr. *Patru*, you are in a very fine humour; I expected to hear your grave arguments, and you laugh.

I ſhould be very ſorry, ſays *D'Ablancourt*, to talk ſeriouſly of ſuch matters, laughing

is the propereſt way of revenging the injuries done to *Venus* and the *Loves*; as for you, if you continue thoſe ſtrict morals, you will I ſuppoſe in a little time take out proceſs againſt nightingales and canary-birds for corrupting our manners; and you will be obliged to ſhut your ears to the ſound of falling waters and whiſtling winds; for theſe ſounds are a ſort of harmony that agreeably lull us aſleep, and perhaps it may be a ſin for good Chriſtians to ſleep.

Oh! quit this pious error, if you are really in it. Muſick is return'd to us with politeneſs and good taſte, and is no more criminal than other arts and ſciences. *David* and many other holy men have delighted in it, and were never condemned for it: *David* was playing upon his harp, when he ſaw *Beerſheba*, and was enamoured with her; happy had it been for him, had he kept to his lyre. I beg pardon for ſaying ſo much upon this ſubject, but I am a paſſionate admirer of muſick, and think it one of the greateſt pleaſures of life.

But I come now to converſation, which is a pleaſure ſo peculiar to our nature, that I am never more ſenſible I am a man, than when I talk; and what Sir, would you de-

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prive us of this noble privilege? I am certain your politeneſs as well as your conſcience ſecretly reproach'd you, the moment you began to condemn ſo uſeful and agreeable a thing as converſation. You ſay, you condemn it, becauſe it is mixed generally with lying, calumny and envy, vices which are the greateſt enemies to Chriſtian piety and charity; this without doubt ſometimes happens, but then the fault lies in the peoples manners, and not in converſation itſelf; theſe faults are ſo far from being eſſentially attach'd to it, that they deſtroy the moſt agreeable and innocent pleaſures, and the moſt charming converſations are thoſe from whence theſe vices are entirely baniſhed; for where malice reigns, politeneſs, ſweetneſs, affability and friendſhip are generally excluded.

I do not know how it happens, that we are ſometimes drawn in to laugh at malicious lies, but I am ſure when we reflect upon them, we muſt naturally fear falling under the ſame cenſure; and we always dislike and deſpiſe thoſe who are addicted to the vices you condemn; and if we ſeem to applaud them, it is either out of fear or complaiſance; and we generally endeavour

deavour to break off all commerce with them as ſoon as we can conveniently: Where many of this ſtamp are leagued together, the friendſhip ſeldom is of long duration; for there is nothing more brittle than theſe commerces; and unleſs people have a mutual eſteem for each other, they can never form a laſting friendſhip, or take pleaſure in one another's company; and innocence is ſo far from being deſtructive to lawful pleaſures, that it renders them more durable and agreeable.

All perſons of ſuperior virtues and merit are not only free from theſe faults themſelves, but they cannot endure them in thoſe who are frequently about them; at the King's levee you hear no malicious ſatyr, he is ſo good a judge of wit and merit, that he always applauds and rewards it, and entirely baniſhes all calumny and malice, ſo that courtiers always are innocent before the King; becauſe they know the way to preferment is to ſhew they themſelves have merit, and not that others want it. You muſt likewiſe carefully avoid all theſe vices before Monſieur *de Turenne*, and yet his converſation is agreeable, he knows how to talk as well as fight; his

mirth

mirth is full of ſprightly wit, without the leaſt mixture of ſatyr; and this virtue ſeems in him to be a ſecret effect of juſtice; for it is but juſt that he whom the whole world ſpeaks well of, ſhould ſpeak no ill of any. There are always a ſet of choſen people at the *Hotels de Conde* and *Conti*, and it has always been the ſame at the Marchioneſs *de Sable*'s, at Madame *de Sevigni*'s, and eſpecially at the *Hotel de Rambouillet*: You know very well that at all theſe places you meet with delightful converſation continually, which is as agreeable to thoſe who are admitted there, as it has been uſeful and beneficial to the court and city: To theſe ſources we are obliged for that gallantry and politeneſs which was formerly unknown to us, but which we now meet with in abundance of people; and it has given a quite different turn to our nation, and a taſte and manners entirely new to it. Do you believe now that in theſe places they ſtand in need of lies or ſatyr to brighten converſation? upon my word they have quite another turn: Their moſt ſerious diſcourſes are always ſolid and entertaining, their mirth is noble, full of fire, good ſenſe, and well turn'd wit; 'tis there we

ſee that ſort of mirth which is ſo hard to attain; you ſee trifles produce the moſt witty converſations, by the brightneſs of a fine genius; a proverb ſhall be ſo finely turn'd as to render it of the higheſt value, you ſee the moſt ſurprizing brighteſt ſtrokes of wit rais'd out of nothing.

Mirth was the life of their converſations, but it was always witty and innocent, their raillery was exerciſed on little failings, and they played innocent tricks with one another, but always in ſuch a manner, that their ſatyr never diſpleaſed thoſe it was aimed at; it was a conſtant rule with them, that nothing deſerved to be call'd a jeſt, that could give pain to thoſe it was level'd at: When they banter'd any, they did it in ſo genteel a manner, and ſhew'd ſo good an opinion of the perſons, that every one liked themſelves the better for their raillery: Theſe ſallies of wit, theſe little debauches of the mind always kept within the bounds of reaſon and prudence, they converſed with eaſe, freedom and reſpect. Thus was the ancient gallantry deſtroyed, and a more eaſy agreeable ſort of good breeding eſtabliſhed in its ſtead; they had always a laſting fund of pleaſure within

within themſelves, without gaining it at the expence of others; they never diverted themſelves with the faults of others, they loved better to praiſe than to condemn, and they did it in ſo nice a manner, that the moſt modeſt felt no pain in being praiſed by them.

All that they found agreeable in hiſtory, fable, or the liberal arts, ſometimes had a place in their converſations; even the ſciences were not abſolutely excluded, but by a new way of treating of them, they plainly ſhewed they were not incompatible with politeneſs and agreeableneſs: All works of wit both in proſe and verſe contributed to their entertainment; they diverted themſelves on all ſubjects, that were not prejudicial to modeſty, reaſon, virtue and piety.

What a rich fund was here for converſation, and yet the failings of others had no part in it; now if, as you ſaid, there can be no agreeable entertainment without it, I ſhould then condemn converſation as much as you do; but you ſee it is quite otherwiſe, and that the moſt delightful diſcourſes are thoſe, where every thing that is offenſive to God is excluded.

Now in my opinion converſation is very advantageous as well as delightful, it poliſhes the wit, it rightly forms the judgment, it gives a true taſte, it ſhews the folly and diſagreeableneſs of vice, and the amiableneſs of virtue and honour. You receive inſtructions from general diſcourſes, without bluſhing, of things you would be aſhamed to enquire into, perhaps through unwillingneſs to diſcover a weakneſs or imperfection; an accidental word will ſometimes make an impreſſion that may correct ſome darling paſſion you were deſirous to conceal; we learn many things in diſcourſe that are not to be found in books; we may pour our moſt ſecret thoughts into the boſom of a friend, whoſe advice often ſuſpends an affliction, that might have deſtroy'd you had you conceal'd it.

But beſides the conſolation we receive in afflictions from a prudent friend, there are many other benefits that converſation affords us; it eaſes the body and mind when fatigued by labours, and I think this ſhews us that we generally take the words of the Goſpel, which you mentioned, in a wrong ſenſe, *that we muſt give an account of every idle word:* Theſe words certainly condemn

condemn thoſe idle tale-bearers, who make it their whole buſineſs to run from houſe to houſe with ſtories of every body's affairs. Now this is certainly very blameable, becauſe it is a great loſs of time, which ought to be much better employed; but as for thoſe converſations that help to leſſen the cares and fatigues of life, to perfect reaſon, and improve our manners, if there ſhould happen to be what you call idle words in ſuch converſations, they are certainly not what the Goſpel condemns. Thoſe that take the words in this ſenſe, miſapply them, for want of rightly diſtinguiſhing, that the pleaſures we find in converſation make it ſo beneficial and inſtructive to us.

But you ſend us into deſerts as the only refuge for piety; you don't conſider what miſchief living in deſerts may do us; our reaſon (without which piety cannot ſubſiſt) may ſuffer ſhipwreck in ſolitude and perpetual ſilence; for without a little commerce we ſoon grow brutiſh, our organs ruſt and decay for want of uſe, our minds grow dull and heavy, and the fumes of melancholy by degrees obſcure the light of reaſon; we loſe the uſe of it inſenſibly,

ſenſibly, and it requires an uncommon fortitude of mind, or a peculiar grace from heaven, to prevent theſe ill conſequences.

Solitude has certainly deſtroy'd as many wits, as converſation has conſciences; theſe are the fruits of ſilence which you ſay ſo well becomes a Chriſtian, as if we muſt loſe our ſenſes to capacitate ourſelves for heaven; but we may certainly enjoy converſation, and look upon it as conducive to virtue and good manners: But you ſay we may meet with uneaſineſs in ſociety; I am very ſenſible of it, and God almighty has ſo ordained it, to let us ſee we ought not to fix our minds upon any thing on earth, but only to amuſe ourſelves with them, ſo as to ſweeten the afflictions and concerns of life; pleaſures have fair outſides, let us be content with that, we rarely find our account in ſearching deeper; we may uſe them as we do flowers, they are pleaſing to the ſight, and grateful to the ſmell, but we muſt not pretend to eat them, becauſe they are generally bitter to the taſte.

I believe I ſhall not have much trouble in juſtifying reading, which you have ſpoke much againſt in a few words; you

yourſelf

yourſelf allow thoſe Books that treat of arts and ſciences, and you are indiſpenſibly obliged to allow us hiſtory, diſcourſes of morals, politicks, and eloquence; voyages, and deſcriptions of foreign countries, thank Heaven, abundance of books have eſcaped condemnation, and conſequently a great many pleaſures are allowed to Chriſtians: Your cenſure is reduced to books of poetry and gallantry, you have paid *Homer* no more reſpect than the divinities and graces; you are for baniſhing him the Chriſtian commonwealth, as *Plato* does from his; you are not content with proſcribing *Ovid*, *Catullus*, and *Anacreon*, you condemn them to the flames, and perhaps would ſhew as little mercy to thoſe who read them: We muſt try if we cannot a little ſoften the rigour of this ſentence.

I begin with *Homer*. What a man was there? what noble maxims? what purity of morals are his writings adorn'd with? all ages and conditions may by him be inſtructed in their duty, he teaches piety to the gods, and obedience to parents; he ſhews us the dangers and misfortunes which ambition, rage and debauchery ex-

poſe men to; he ſhews us the uſefulneſs of moderation and wiſdom, and what felicity attends them; he does not content himſelf with barely ſpeaking of virtue, he makes us in love with it; he ſhews the flowery paths of it, and he adorns it with ſuch ornaments, that thoſe who would be content with naked virtue, muſt ſure be charm'd with her, as ſhe comes out of his hands.

There is nothing more ſolid and ſerious than the writings of *Heſiod*, *Pindar*, and *Sophocles*, their verſes contain pleaſure and inſtruction; *Ariſtophanes*'s comedies are delightful and full of innocent raillery, free from inſolence and impurity: *Anacreon* indeed is amorous, and full of innocent mirth, but there is nothing in his expreſſions that could wound the chaſteſt ears.

Among the *Latins* moſt of *Horace*'s verſes are good; *Terence*, *Tibullus* *Propertius*, and *Virgil* write in a very chaſte and elegant ſtile.

Our poets are more wiſe and ſcrupulous than any others; our language as well as their own inclinations incline them to it; our language is very chaſte, and does not take any liberties: Of all our poets down

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from *Marot* and St. *Gelais* to *Malherbe* and *Corneille*, we have not one that openly offends virtue, except ſome few wretched writers that are never read.

Why then ſhould you forbid the reading of all theſe authors, if you condemn poetry and gallantry becauſe they treat of love, and other ſentiments of the heart; you may for the ſame reaſon condemn hiſtories, for there is not one that does not give ſome account of this paſſion, and of ſuch extraordinary pieces of gallantry as are not to be equal'd among the poets; fiction in this point ſeems to fall ſhort of truth.

Does not even the Holy Scripture give us as lively deſcriptions of amorous, and even ſhameful intrigues, as any we can meet with in profane hiſtory?

But to bring examples for our juſtification. St. *Auſtin*, St. *Jerome*, and moſt of the ancient fathers mention many of the moſt paſſionate expreſſions of the Poets; and St. *Paul* himſelf has quoted two *Greek* Poets.

And in our days thoſe learned pious hermits, whoſe virtue has made them ſo admired and ſo unfortunate, and whoſe

ſufferings have been a great wound to the church, theſe hermits I ſay have not been ſo ſevere as you in their cenſures: They have let us know in ſome of their works, that they have read the writings of the moſt excellent poets in all languages, and have not ſcrupled to add learning to the ſolidity of their doctrines.

In all the colleges in *Europe* they put hardly any other books into the hands of their youth, but thoſe that you condemn? Pray has that religious ſociety any other method, whoſe merit is ſo juſtly envied for their virtue and learning, in which your religion always finds a ſure refuge in her greateſt diſtreſs.

The religious of this ſociety make it their chief care to reform the manners, and ſanctify the bodies of their ſtudents; but yet they don't neglect to poliſh and enlighten their minds: They who tread in the apoſtles ſteps, and ſend miſſionaries to preach Chriſtianity in *Aſia* and both the *Indies*, don't think it unbecoming their piety to make great ſcholars and fine gentlemen in *Europe*. I think I have heard that their founder commanded them to ſtudy the *belles lettres*, in which are comprehended the very books you condemn. In-

Indeed, ſays *Patru*, you have ſtrictly kept your word with me, in drawing your arguments from principles I cannot conteſt; I own your laſt example was of great force, and worth a thouſand others, and it was ſuperfluous to mention the holy fathers, unleſs you deſign'd to cite all the great men of that order.

If, ſays *D'Ablancourt*, it is a crime in us to read ſuch ſort of books, it certainly was no leſs ſo in thoſe great and holy men; for things that are bad in themſelves do not change their nature from the character of the perſons that uſe them.

So that if theſe books are really dangerous, they ought carefully to be kept from all young people, notwithſtanding the advantages they may gain by them; for religion and ſanctity of manners are, beyond compariſon, preferable to politeneſs and wit, or whatever may be acquir'd by this fine learning.

I own that in ſome of the ancient poets there are a few dangerous paſſages that make one bluſh, which ought to be concealed from children; as for thoſe who are more advanc'd in years, it is to be hop'd their principles are too well eſta-

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bliſh'd to receive any criminal impreſſions from them.

I have often regretted, that *Horace* (who was one of the politeſt men in the court of *Auguſtus*) ſhould in two or three places of his works fall into this error; there is ſuch a deformity in vice, that he ſeems to be another man in thoſe writings; but I know him again in his Ode to *Barina*, which, in my opinion, is one of the moſt polite pieces of antiquity, and has in it the moſt of that fine raillery that ſo few are capable of.

If any body has but the leaſt delicacy, they will reject and skip over thoſe looſe paſſages; and if politeneſs will make us reject them, how much more will Chriſtianity teach us to deſpiſe them? Thoſe obſcenities, ſays *Patru*, though very criminal, are not what I think the moſt dangerous; they are too groſs to injure men who have any honour, or religion, or delicacy of mind; but what I eſteem of the moſt pernicious conſequence is, thoſe places where our ſofteſt paſſions are repreſented in ſo agreeable and engaging a manner, that the lively deſcriptions not only pleaſe and affect the heart while we are reading,

but

but they leave the moſt dangerous impreſſions imaginable to virtue and innocence; all ſeems fair in appearance, but the ſerpent lies concealed under theſe flowers, and the poiſon it ſheds is ſo much the more dangerous, becauſe we are not ſenſible of its influence.

Vice is never ſo deſtructive as when it hides itſelf under the fair appearance of virtue; it ſecretly inſinuates itſelf into the ſoul, and when the language is fine, and vice is adorn'd with all the ornaments art can beſtow upon her; the mind is eaſily ſurpriz'd, and the greater our delicacy, the more liable we are to be wounded by ſuch keen arrows.

A play or a novel repreſents its heroes to be paſſionate lovers, yet very virtuous; but when their paſſions have inſenſibly crept into our hearts, can we promiſe our ſelves the ſame virtue, or can we aſſure ourſelves that we ſhall have the fortitude or power to confine our paſſions within the dictates of reaſon.

Believe me, theſe ſorts of entertainments are very dangerous; the tender examples, the melancholy accounts, added to the beauty of the language, inſenſibly enchant us;

us; I am not apprehenſive of much danger from the ſtory of *Corinna*, or the *Epheſian* matron; but I greatly fear the ill effects of *Dido* and *Ximena*. Pray let us hear what you can ſay in their defence, and pray remember that there are many as fearful, and as little able to overcome the danger as myſelf.

Oh! ſays *D'Ablancourt* ſmiling, if you are of this temper, I cannot anſwer for you; your virtue will certainly ſuffer ſhipwreck, if you expoſe yourſelf to danger, therefore I conjure you not to read any books of that kind; but to be ſerious; ſome minds are ſo very weak and ill-grounded, that every thing corrupts them; their imaginations are ſo tender and unſtable, that they are not only ſtruck, but hurried away, and enſnar'd by the leaſt temptation; the ideas they form to themſelves of vice make them alarm'd at the moſt innocent things they read; in a picture they diſcover a thouſand things the painter never deſign'd nor thought of; they never mind the fineneſs of the paint, nor beauty of the deſign; they are only intent to find out ill; ſuch kind of people are offended and injur'd by the ſong

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of ſongs; their imagination is affected by the charms of *Judith*, and *Beerſheba's* bathing has almoſt as ill an effect upon them as it had upon *David:* The frailty of theſe people moves my compaſſion; they become miſerable victims to temptation; they meet a Devil wherever they go; they ought not to ſee the moſt innocent books; they ſhould be baniſh'd all commerce with the world; for an unguarded expreſſion, or the ſight of a beautiful perſon, will diſorder their conſciences; let them go into the country, or into deſarts, I am afraid they will even there find ſomething to diſturb their minds.

But theſe are a peculiar ſort of people, and they ought not to be regarded as precedents for thoſe who are leſs ſuſceptible, and have greater ſtability of mind. *Dido* and *Ximena* ſpeaking in a book may amuſe the mind, and not corrupt the heart; we may pity their hard fate, without imitating them; and it is no guilt to be moved with compaſſion at ſuch ſort of ſtories; for our paſſions are not really crimes in themſelves: but I ſhould have nothing to ſay for them if it were naturally poſſible to retrench them entirely, and

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be perfectly inſenſible to them; but ſince it is impoſſible to ſeparate them from man without deſtroying his nature, we muſt only endeavour to rectify them, and place them upon right objects: We may now and then amuſe them with theſe fictitious ſtories; for after all, hiſtory itſelf, which you do not condemn, affects our paſſions, and raiſes different emotions in us; and yet when we read a melancholy or paſſionate ſtory, we don't endeavour to imitate the ſubjects of it, but we rather guard ourſelves from falling into temptations that are attended with ſuch fatal conſequences; it ſhews us the melancholy effects of ungovern'd paſſions, and is more proper to extinguiſh than to kindle them; for I can hardly believe that a woman who has read all the adventures of *Dido* or *Phædra*, will ever perſuade herſelf to ſearch for an *Eneas*, or an *Hippolitus*: The pleaſure the judicious take in theſe deſcriptions and narrations, is a pleaſure that only affects the taſte; the examples of the moſt wiſe and holy men may inſtruct us not to condemn all agreeable books in general, that deſcribe the paſſions, but only ſuch as openly talk of crimes, and by groſs

and

and ſhameful deſcriptions offend modeſty and virtue.

But I would not, by juſtifying theſe books, be thought to vindicate thoſe idle people who wholly employ themſelves in reading Romances, and ſuch trifling books. Reading is a diverſion that ſhould have its ſtated times; I don't blame thoſe who delight in reading agreeable books, but I blame thoſe who conſume the greateſt part of their time in ſuch vain amuſements, ſince the loſs or abuſe of time is in itſelf criminal.

Perhaps if I lived ſtill at *Paris*, I might think it for my intereſt to condemn plays with great vehemence; but ſince I am retir'd into the country, far from thoſe pleaſing ſpectacles, I ſhall not engage myſelf in a quarrel which no longer concerns me.

I perceive, that for a certain time people have mightily exclaimed againſt plays; ſome zealots have decried them as great enemies to religion and purity of manners, and they make it a matter of faith to be of that opinion; I will not pretend to decide againſt them, tho' I could offer many things upon that head.

It appears to me that nothing but the Scriptures, general councils, and tradition can make an article of faith; now the Scripture no where expreſsly condemns plays, neither has any general council determin'd this point that I know of; and as for tradition we muſt draw our proofs from the writings of the ancient fathers, who, indeed, have very much exclaimed againſt the publick ſhews of the age they lived in; and it does not appear very clear whether they have forbid them under pain of damnation, or whether they only adviſe thoſe againſt them who would arrive at the greateſt ſtate of perfection. However this be, if I am not miſtaken, there remains ſeveral other diſtinctions upon this head, which ſeem to render the matter a little doubtful; they had entirely loſt their taſte for the plays of *Terence* and *Menander*, which were admired by their forefathers; the plays they acted in thoſe days were without art, and either impudent or full of buffoonry; they repreſented the inceſts and adulteries of the Gods and fabulous heroes in a very obſcene manner; and theſe plays were always accompanied with impious or bloody ſpectacles, ſo that it is

not to be wonder'd at that the fathers ſhould ſo vehemently declaim againſt ſuch infamous and inhuman ſights.

But our preſent ſtage has none of thoſe vices, which gave ſo juſt an occaſion of offence to theſe holy men; our carouſals are, indeed, polite and magnificent, but they coſt no body their lives; now there is nothing in them to create evil thoughts or looſe imaginations; but in thoſe days Chriſtianity was but beginning to ſpread in the world, and it was to be fear'd that the new converts might be ſeduc'd by thoſe repreſentations, which recall'd to their minds the ideas of Paganiſm, from which they were but juſt happily departed; they were people juſt recover'd from a dangerous diſeaſe, who were oblig'd to obſerve a conſtant regular diet for fear of a relapſe; their new faith might cool, or ſuffer ſhipwreck by thoſe dangerous ſights; therefore there was reaſon to fence againſt this danger by ſeverity and ſtrict diſcipline.

But all theſe circumſtances are now no more; our faith is eſtabliſh'd, and the Chriſtian religion has no reaſon to fear ſuch attempts, nor the contagion of ido-

latry, and, God be thanked, it would now be folly to terrify ourſelves with ſuch fears.

Our plays at preſent are polite, witty, and inſtructive, free from all dangerous expreſſions and indecent geſtures; our tragedies are noble and ſerious repreſentations of the misfortunes we are drawn into by crimes or folly; and our comedies are lively deſcriptions of thoſe follies or vices which the holy fathers themſelves ſometimes attack'd with raillery.

What compariſon, therefore, is there betwixt their theatre and ours; they are alike in nothing but the name, and we ſurely cannot pretend to place thoſe plays that are impious and obſcene upon the level with thoſe that are free from libertiniſm and impiety, and where vice is puniſh'd, and virtue rewarded.

But you ſay the beauty and manner of the players may raiſe tender inclinations in the ſoul; very well; are there then no handſome women but upon the ſtage; we may certainly ſee ſome at aſſemblies, in the ſtreets, and at all publick places, even at Churches; therefore it muſt, by the ſame rule, be a crime to frequent any of theſe places, becauſe we may ſee pretty women

there whoſe preſence may be much more dangerous than the players, becauſe we often ſee modeſty accompany beauty, which is ſeldom if ever ſeen among the players.

Now, if it would be ridiculous to think of excluding ourſelves all theſe places, why muſt going to plays alone be thought a crime, when you are in the ſame danger of being enſnar'd by beauty in all publick aſſemblies? and when all ſorts of ſcenes are tranſacted every where, why ſhould they ceaſe to be ſo upon the ſtage? What then have we to fear? is it the fineneſs of the language? I have already prov'd, that we may read without guilt, and I cannot believe but that we may ſafely hear any thing repeated which would not be criminal to read.

I cannot anſwer for others; but whenever I have gone to a play, even in my youth, after having laugh'd or wept heartily, which equally gave me pleaſure, I always came home and ſupp'd with tranquillity, and brought home no other thoughts but whether the play was fine, or well or ill perform'd.

If others find themſelves more frail, I adviſe them to ſtay at home; they are guilty by going when they know their own weakneſs; for they may by it expoſe themſelves to a mortal danger; ſome people mire themſelves where others can paſs dry-ſhod; but this circumſtance does not make plays criminal, nor is it a reaſon why people whoſe hearts are as hard as mine ſhould not go to them.

But, as I before told you, I don't inſiſt upon any thing I have ſaid in their defence, for fear of not being thought a good Chriſtian; I only propoſe theſe matters as doubts, and I readily ſubmit to the true belief: I ſhould be very ſilly to be in love with an error that can be of no advantage to me. But as this affair is not entirely decided, and as the fathers are not clear enough in it, I can hardly perſuade myſelf that there is any harm in thoſe plays that are chaſte, uſeful, and agreeable, and the thoughts and language beautiful; and I believe after all, plays will long continue under condemnation, and yet be frequented, and eſteemed one of the greateſt pleaſures in the world.

As for Gaming, I freely give it give up to you entirely; I have been too great a ſufferer by it to ſay any thing in its defence; I am as angry at it as you can be, and to ſay the truth, I have been a great ſinner that way, but am now become a ſincere penitent, and have long endeavour'd to perſuade others againſt that great enemy to conſciences and purſes. I am grown like thoſe women, who, after a long courſe of lewdneſs, turn devout, and are very piouſly offended at others taking the moſt innocent liberties; therefore, Sir, ſince we are ſo well agreed, let us join all our forces to exclaim againſt gaming; it is the bane of ſociety, the ruin of families, the ſource of ſwearing and all impiety, the greateſt enemy to virtue, *&c.* but yet there are ſome games that appear ſo noble, and employ the mind ſo agreeably, that I don't know whether they ought to come under our cenſure or not: What ſhall we do with cheſs and tables? ſhall we be as ill-natur'd to them as *Gauvin*, who was nephew to a King of *Great Britain*, was, who, as our friend *Sarraſin* tells us, having one day play'd at cheſs, the men mov'd of themſelves (with-

out doubt by the help of magick) and matted him twice, which enraged him ſo that he broke the board all to pieces; but ſure it would be very uncourteous in us to do ſo, who were never ſerv'd ſo ſcurvily by theſe enchanters.

What ſhall we do then; ſhall we ſhew ſome humanity towards it? no; no favour, ſays *Patru* ſmiling; I ſee what you would be at; you are a great hypocrite, and by a fair appearance endeavour to catch me. Nay, ſays *D'Ablancourt*, tho' you are ſo devout yourſelf, don't judge ſo ill of your neighbour; I give you up *Lanſquenet*, *Baſſette*, and all other dangerous games, but in pity ſpare me *Ombre*. No, ſays *Patru*, I will not ſo much as ſpare the game of the Gooſe, tho' it is render'd ſo venerable by its antiquity and dignity: At all theſe games they ſwear and cheat, therefore I allow none of them.

Thus indeed, ſays *D'Ablancourt*, it ſometimes happens, but pray ſhew me one that ſwears and cheats at cards; that is diſintereſted, generous, and ſincere at other times; ſhew me but ſuch a one, and I will agree with you, that the vices are in the games, and not in the perſons.

Certainly

Certainly nothing is ſo diſagreeable in converſation as theſe continual ſwearers; but I ſee a great many well-bred people, who play only to divert themſelves, without any thought of being enrich'd by it; but in mirth and gaiety innocently unbend the mind now and then for an hour or two in this manner: But you are in the right; we'll not ſpare one of them; they ſhall all be damn'd. Now I think you have great reaſon to be ſatisfied with my determination; but I ſhall not be ſo complaiſant to you as to games of exerciſe; I will not, to oblige you, condemn hunting, tennis, nor any diverſions of ſo noble and innocent a nature, and ſo beneficial to our health; but I don't wonder you are ſo ſevere againſt them, when you have likewiſe attack'd walking; ſo that you have reduced us to inſenſibility, if we deſire to be good Chriſtians; and if God is not merciful to us, we can't with a ſafe conſcience breathe the freſh air.

I think now I have fully anſwered all your accuſations, and have made it appear that all thoſe pleaſures you condemn are not criminal in themſelves, but only by the abuſe of them; and that we may find means

to enjoy them, without hazarding our ſalvation.

But there are many pleaſures you have not taken notice of, pleaſures ſo pure and innocent, they are not liable to the leaſt ſuſpicion of danger: If you were not already tired, I would entertain you with a deſcription of them: I am not at all tired, ſays *Patru*, I hear you with the utmoſt pleaſure, we have time upon our hands, the weather is fine, and the place we are in is very delightful: Well then, ſays *D'Ablancourt*, if I fatigue you, you muſt thank yourſelf.

I begin with husbandry. Perhaps you who live in cities may be ſurprized to hear it rank'd among pleaſures, but it is nevertheleſs a very great one: I don't ſpeak of hard labour, and the violent ſweats that attend it as the fruit of our diſobedience, but what pleaſure do we find in cultivating the earth, when we only do it for an amuſement?

For my part I own to you, that when I have beheld the plough'd land lie in ſo nice and exact a manner, I have not only been delighted with the proſpect, and with the skill and care of the labourers,

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but I have ſometimes had an ambition to do the ſame; and I don't think the work ſo very laborious as people imagine, but I believe there's a great deal of pleaſure in it.

Caſting up, removing and enriching the earth, throwing in the grain, all theſe in my opinion are agreeable employments, and the obſervations we may make are extreamly entertaining; with what confidence do we truſt the earth with the moſt valuable treaſures? and how faithfully does ſhe diſcharge her truſt? The grain that is encloſed in the ridges of earth, being enlarged by the moiſture of the ground, and the warmth of the ſun, ſhoots up a point that inſenſibly pierces thro' the earth, and covers and adorns it with a beautiful green, which points encreaſing by degrees, riſe in little ſtalks to a conſiderable height; and as weak as they are, are able to reſiſt wind, rain and hail; from the end of this ſtalk as out of a caſe ſhoots an ear of a regular ſtructure, arm'd on all ſides with prickles, to defend itſelf from the rapine of the birds.

The dreſſing of the vine is another delightful employment, whether we ſet rows of

of ſtems along the earth, and plant them, or bend the boughs and cover them with earth, where they take root, and grow into new vines; it is no leſs agreeable to tie the boughs as they grow up to their props; after which 'tis lovely to let our eyes range over the vaſt number of vines planted in regular rows, which appear equally beautiful if we do this in the ſpring, when the leaves begin to open, or in the autumn, when the ripe grapes appear between the leaves that almoſt cover them, and entirely defend them from the injuries of the weather; add to all this the pleaſures of the vintage, the hurry without diſorder, ſome cut the grapes, others gather them, others ſtamp them or carry them to the preſs, bending with joy under ſo agreeable a burden.

What ſhall I ſay of gardening, and the care in watering the lands? 'tis no ſmall pleaſure to ſee a river carried wherever we pleaſe, and water, obedient to the hand that guides it, run wherever its maſter's pleaſure or buſineſs calls it.

What pleaſure is there in obſerving bees? I have no mind to make myſelf a *Thirſis* or a *Celadon*, and go and tend the flocks;

flocks; but I can't help thinking it very agreeable to ſee the ſheep run about the fields, and feed in a peaceable manner, or to ſee the lambs ſever'd from the ſheep: The ſheep ſhearing is another pleaſure, which is generally attended with a ruſtick mirth that is not diſagreeable.

When I am in the country, I employ myſelf about all the things I have been ſpeaking of, but my chief buſineſs is the planting and pruning of fruit-trees, and grafting them, or in cutting off ſuperfluous branches; ſometimes I cut trees into buſhy heads, others I let grow wild; I make hedges and *eſpaliers*; and in this manner my hours glide ſweetly away.

There certainly is a prodigious pleaſure in eating fruit of ones own planting. I think my own *bon chretien* pears the beſt I ever taſted; and I am more afraid of the inclemency of the weather for them than other trees, becauſe I planted them myſelf.

But of all country amuſements there is none I think more entertaining than the culture of flowers; but I am not one of thoſe who moſt admire thoſe tulips and carnations, that pleaſe by their ſcarceneſs

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and great names, more than by their beauty.

There are people in the world who make a ſerious buſineſs of this pleaſure; a whiſtling wind makes them tremble, a flower-pot miſplaced, or too much expoſed, gives them the utmoſt uneaſineſs: for my part I underſtand none of this nicety, but the management of flowers is to me very agreeable, when it is not a paſſion but an amuſement.

I think the commoneſt flowers the moſt beautiful; roſes, violets, jeſſamin, tuberoſes, and jonquils give me abundance of delight. I am charmed with the beauties of nature, the flowers that we ſee ſpread over the fields ſometimes pleaſe me more than the greateſt care and art.

But there is no pleaſure without allay, for I cannot help being concerned at the rigour of the winter, that deſtroys their beauty, or kills them.

When I went into *Provence*, I was charmed with the beauty of the orange-trees; there were ripe oranges upon them of an extraordinary ſize, and at the ſame time little round ones encompaſſed and crowned with flowers and leaves: This

country may be juſtly called the land of flowers, and the people are very curious about them: Here you may with pleaſure talk of the weather, and the brightneſs of it ſeems to add beauty to the diſcourſe. 'Tis ſurprizing to ſee the rudeneſs and brutality of the natives of this place, the ſweetneſs and ſerenity that ſhould be in their tempers is entirely in the air, and they are very well pleaſed to have it continue there.

The moſt pleaſing day I ever ſpent was in this country, I went in the morning into a grove of oranges and citrons, and walking by a rivulet that run through it, I was covered with the flowers that fell from the trees upon my head, and a book I was reading in was likewiſe cover'd with them: I can't expreſs the beauty of this proſpect, to ſee upon all the trees the golden oranges and citrons, mix'd with green ones, and a vaſt quantity of bloſſoms and leaves of the moſt beautiful green in the world; this was to me the moſt lovely ſight my eyes ever beheld.

'Tis none of the leaſt felicities that huſbandry yields ſuch delight, ſince it is ſo abſolutely neceſſary; for without labour and

and dreſſing, the lands would be barren, the moſt excellent trees and plants would produce nothing without cultivating. This puts me in mind of a ſtory that was told me by one of my neighbours, a villager of good natural parts, but a perfect ruſtick; there is no great invention in it, but I was pleaſed with the ſimplicity and innocence of the fable.

In the beginning, ſays he, the earth perceiving that ſhe produced ſhrubs and plants, and other greens, began to grow very proud of her ornaments, and would not ſuffer any body to touch her; but man at laſt found a happy minute, and addreſſed himſelf to her, and ſhewed her her error; he told her all her abundance was vain and unfruitful, he made it appear to her how uſeleſs all her productions were, without they were perfected by art; but he aſſured her, if ſhe would truſt herſelf to his management, he would adorn her better than ſhe could herſelf, and that he would make her more beautiful as well as ſerviceable.

The earth accepted of this offer, and man began to root up the uſeleſs ſhrubs and buſhes, he ſowed corn, he dreſs'd her vines, and made them loſe their wildneſs;

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he did the ſame by all other trees, and the earth with pleaſure and ſurprize beheld plants, flowers and trees riſe out of her bowels; ſo changed, ſhe did not know them to be the ſame, and fruits ſhe did not think herſelf capable of producing; ſhe then reſigned herſelf entirely to man's conduct, and promiſed him to yield corn and fruit in abundance, if he would continue his care and labours.

And indeed, added *D'Ablancourt*, almoſt every thing the earth produces is uſeleſs and unfruitful, 'till improved and cultivated; and it is the ſame with us, nature has only made a beginning, and if we don't take care to compleat her work by piety and reaſon, we can produce nothing but thorns and brambles, which will fill us with a vain ſilly pride. I have done with the moral of my fable, but husbandry has been the employment of wiſe men in all ages; the *Romans* never forſook this exerciſe, 'till they abandoned virtue; our anceſtors delighted in it, and it certainly was for that reaſon the nobility choſe to reſide in the country; and tho' vanity and effeminacy have made it at preſent pretty much diſregarded, yet there are ſtill illuſtrious

luſtrious perſons who devote their leiſure hours to it.

I have heard that while the Prince was priſoner in *Vincennes* wood, he amuſed himſelf with cultivating ſome flowers, and I fancy laurels and palm trees would flouriſh mightily under ſuch a hand. Under the laſt reigns of the *Valois's*, the Chancellor of the hoſpital having left the court, relieved himſelf from the reflection on the publick miſeries by husbandry, and with peace and pleaſure enjoyed the fruits of honour and innocence.

At the ſame time the famous Admiral *de Colligny* employed himſelf in the like manner; and we are told, that when the Queen ſent to him, to enquire into the cauſe of a conſpiracy againſt the publick peace that he was accuſed of, the officer that went found him in a tree in his orchard, pruning it; and all the anſwer he gave was, that he deſired the gentleman to give her Majeſty an account how he found him employed, ſignifying that peace and innocence are the inſeparable companions of agriculture; and that it was not likely a man, whoſe mind was calm enough to delight in ſuch occupations, ſhould fill his

his head with wars and tumults. Husbandry has not only been the employment of private perſons, but of the greateſt kings, who have often preferr'd it to all their grandeur.

Diocleſian and *Maximinian* left their empires, and each of them retired into a peaceful ſolitude, where they cultivated the earth with their own hands; and they tell us, that *Maximinian* being tired with this ſolitary life, had a mind to reaſcend his throne, and went to find out *Diocleſian*, to prevail with him to do the ſame.

Diocleſian, after having liſten'd to all his arguments, led him into a garden planted with fine trees, and covered with fruits and flowers; *Maximinian* beheld with ſurprize the exact order and beauty of the place, the tallneſs of the trees, ſome placed in regular walks, others turned into mazes and labyrinths, the beauty and ſweetneſs of the flowers which perfumed all round about, and the fine caſcades and canals which were in great abundance; after having with pleaſure and ſurprize beheld ſo ſweet a place, he told his friend he was not only charmed with the exactneſs and good taſte of the maſter, but likewiſe with

the invention of the perſon who laid this plan.

All you ſee, ſays *Dioclesian*, was my own deſign, I laid this plan, I have done every thing that you behold; this was the haven I found to repoſe in, from the tempeſts of a boiſterous world, to whoſe inclemency you would again expoſe me, but I ſhall never give ear to counſel ſo deſtructive to my felicity; go and reign if you pleaſe, or can; as for me, inſtead of an empire full of terrors and misfortunes, ſtrife and envy, I will content myſelf with the government of this little ſpot of earth, which I always find tractable and obedient, and conſtantly makes large returns for all my care and trouble; 'till I came hither I never knew what it was truly to live and reign, but now I enjoy life, and reign abſolutely.

Maximinian would not profit by this diſcourſe, but periſhed miſerably in his enterprize; and *Dioclesian* enjoyed many years the fruits of his virtues and labours, and died in a happy good old age.

Theſe, Sir, are the pleaſures we taſte in the country; this made me prefer a peaceful retirement to living at *Paris*: The noiſe and tumult of cities have ſome-

thing

thing pompous in them that attracts our bodies, or rather our pride is seduced by the false ideas of greatness we form to ourselves, but alas! how few make any considerable figure in courts or cities? 'tis amazing to think what infinite numbers spend their days in a continual hurry and fatigue, who arrive at nothing but the bare being spectators of the glory of others, who perhaps had much less merit than themselves.

Besides, in cities we are not our own masters, and a thousand businesses and cares steal us from ourselves; in the country we enjoy solid peace, we there taste all the true happiness this life can yield us, we have no dependence upon others favours, but live sweetly in an undisturbed felicity, in the seat of innocence, liberty, and independence.

Ambition, vanity, softness, luxury, and the extravagance of others make us always want something; in cities we find necessity amidst the greatest plenty; but in the countrey our desires are composed, and we stand in need of nothing but what nature with a liberal hand supplies us with.

How blind, alas, are thoſe, who diſdainfully deſpiſe the countrey, and think it only fit for peaſants? they are aſhamed to breathe the ſame air with ſuch poor wretches, they never conſider them as brethren, nor remember that the meaneſt creature came originally from the ſame ſtock as the greateſt prince; and ſome of theſe peaſants may perhaps have greater merit than themſelves; for 'tis only pride, and a ſilly falſe notion of happineſs, that creates this diſtaſte.

If we only conſider'd our own happineſs, and only ſtudied to pleaſe the Almighty; if our true ſentiments were not deſtroyed by a vain deſire of pleaſing the world, and by falſe appearances, how few would ſeek after titles and honours, or bear the inſupportable fetters that bind them ſlaves to other men?

We are in cities whatever our borrowed ſtation makes us, perhaps a lawyer, a mechanick, a judge, a courtier, or a ſoldier; in the countrey we are none of theſe, we there are only men, we renew (if I may be allowed the expreſſion) our acquaintance with our mother earth, and we find a ſecret pleaſure in the alli-

ance;

ance; but we behold the heavens with a much greater delight, and both heaven and earth ſhew us the utmoſt indulgence, and diſplay all the beauties of nature to our view; the ſeaſons ſweetly vary, and yet we ſeem to enjoy continual ſpring.

As men are not ſo common here, they are much more eſteemed than in cities; ſociety is ſweeter, becauſe leſs frequent; we act without conſtraint according to our own inclinations, and this freedom of mind produces liberty and friendſhip; we love one another ſincerely, becauſe we have no deſire for riches and honours, which are the common cauſes of hatred and diviſions; you are not obliged to flatter the vices or paſſions of any, and which is no ſmall felicity, we may be virtuous and religious, without being ridiculous: Add to all theſe pleaſures the agreeable amuſements the countrey furniſhes us withal; when I am there, beſides husbandry, which I have largely ſpoken of, I ſometimes hunt, fiſh and fowl: I read or perhaps write, I viſit my labourers, I ſometimes feaſt with my neighbours, whoſe innocence always charms me; we ſpend our evenings in a great deal of gayety, we talk of a thou-

ſand different things, and always mix our diſcourſe with ſomething that may improve our minds, and make us more agreeable to one another. Can you form an idea of a happier life on earth than this? a life, where you enjoy perfect peace, and (which is the greateſt felicity in the world) perfect health and perfect pleaſure. No quarrels, no law-ſuits to diſturb your reſt, but all is ſweet, and full of innocence. In cities we meet with a thouſand melancholy or diſagreeable objects; we are grieved to ſee the proſperity of the wicked, and the misfortunes of the good; but in the countrey every thing we ſee delights us; we behold valleys, plains, fields and meadows, groves and rivers, gardens, plants and flowers, and a beautiful sky over our heads; our ears are at the ſame time delighted with the ſweeteſt harmony in the world. But I forget that while I am pleaſing myſelf, you may grow tired with the deſcription; I beg your pardon, but I have ſuch vaſt obligations to the countrey, that I cannot keep within bounds, when I talk of its pure and innocent pleaſures, ſuch as I hope you will with all your rigour allow us to enjoy; and I am ſure theſe are the only

only ſubſtantial ones, ſo that if all pleaſure is ſin, what a miſerable condition are we in who live in the country, without ever once imagining it?

And one of the greateſt pleaſures it affords, and which I have always thought a very laudable one, is the contemplating all the wonders and beauties of nature; the adoration and ſentiments theſe contemplations inſpire, I always thought were pleaſures well-becoming the dignity of human nature; for my part I am never tired with beholding all theſe beautiful objects, not only thoſe I mentioned when I was ſpeaking of agriculture, but likewiſe all the reſt of the decorations and magnificence of the univerſe. The infinite production of inſects and animals, all perfect in their kinds, the beauty and fruitfulneſs of the earth, that yields ſufficient ſupplies of every thing that is neceſſary for thoſe infinite numbers of birds, beaſts, inſects, and men, who can conſider this without adoration and aſtoniſhment? who can behold the other beauties without a ſecret pleaſure? The rainbow that ſhines with ſuch variety of beauteous colours, *Aurora* when ſhe declares the day's approach, the ſun either

at his ſetting or riſing, when he gilds the clouds with ſuch brightneſs, that he ſeems to imprint upon them his own image?

The rains, the winds, the dew that ſweetly moiſtens the earth, the wonderful variety of fruits, plants and flowers both for uſe and beauty, the regular courſe of the ſeaſons which never vary, the diverſity of climates, the night and day which alternately ſucceed each other, and divide our time between repoſe and labour, the immenſity of the ſea ſo uſeful and ſo dreadful; the height, extent and brightneſs of the firmament, the vaſt quantity of ſtars, the ſwiftneſs of theſe prodigious bodies, that move with inconceivable rapidity, without the leaſt ceſſation or diſorder!

For all things act in exact obedience to the Almighty's will, once declared to them; but man, who is endued with reaſon, continually ſtrays from the divine commands, and often abandons that inſtinct which birds never loſe: Now the proſpect and conſideration of all theſe wonders raiſes in the mind delights that can never be equal'd by the pleaſures of ſenſe.

I wonder, ſays *Patru*, that when you were ſpeaking of the pleaſure of contemplating nature in her viſible effects, you did not mention that of knowing and ſearching into the cauſe of theſe effects.

Becauſe, ſays *D'Ablancourt*, I look upon it as a very trifling amuſement; for what ſhall I know after all my time and ſtudy? what certainty is there in any of the diſcoveries that are pretended to have been made, except of ſome few things of which we have demonſtration; the reſt are all the meer conjectures of a fine imagination, witty viſions of idle people.

I really wonder how man, who is ſo full of vanity, dare once to turn his eyes this way, ſince I ſhould think nothing elſe could ſo fully mortify his pride; for the void, the atoms, ſubtle matter, the formation of metals, the vortex, the origin of winds, the principle of life in beaſts, the virtue of the loadſtone; all the imaginary opinions upon theſe points, and above all, the uncertainty and contrariety of them, diſcover fully the ignorance and blindneſs of mankind.

Shall I without ſtudy, or aid of philoſophy, tell you the cauſe of all theſe things?

things? It is God; perhaps you'll tell me I have made a noble diſcovery; but with all the learning in the world, this is all we can be aſſured of; and I think this ſhould cure us of our inſatiable thirſt of knowing, which is a dangerous ſickneſs of the ſoul.

Theſe ſurprizing miracles were not made for us to pry into, but that we might adore their great Author; and after all, what ſhould we be the better for knowing whether the earth or the ſun moves, and what occaſions the flux and reflux of the ſea? 'tis in my opinion the higheſt folly to conſume our lives in vain ſearches after impenetrable myſteries, which are deſignedly hid from our knowledge.

What occaſion have we to know the nature of theſe things; we have nothing to do but to enjoy the benefit of them; and he who ſpends his life in ſearching into their hidden cauſes, appears to me as ridiculous as if he went to a fine opera, and inſtead of pleaſing himſelf with the ſight of it, ſhould ſhut himſelf up behind the ſtage, to obſerve the management of the machines. In my opinion, ſays *Patru's* diſciple, a contemplation ſo bound-

ed is a very ſuperficial chimerical pleaſure.

I am aſtoniſh'd, ſays *D'Ablancourt*, that a man (who is capable of thinking, and who knows that faculty, diſtinguiſhes him from the reſt of the creation) can call it a ſuperficial pleaſure, to contemplate objects ſo divinely bright; but to make you fully comprehend the exquiſite pleaſure of contemplation, I muſt beg you to conſider the vaſt delight a man takes who is deeply in love, in contemplating and ſilently beholding all the beauties of his beloved object.

The pleaſure of contemplation is not confin'd to ſight; the mind partakes of it, and is exquiſitely pleaſed with its own reflections on the vaſt perfection of theſe wonderful works, and with the immenſe skill of the great author and diſpoſer of all things; for we may be aſſur'd the ſun was not only made to give us light, but that we might admire its brightneſs and luſtre, and this admiration is certainly one of the moſt noble and ſupream pleaſures a human mind is capable of knowing.

Brutes enjoy, in common with us, the benefits of nature; all that we in this reſpect

ſpect excel them in, is, that we can behold with reaſon's eye all theſe beauties, and that our reflections on the creatures naturally lead us to adore the Creator; for every thing we behold declares there is a God, who demonſtrates himſelf to us in all the works of nature; is there no felicity in this conſideration; is this a uſeleſs contemplation for us Chriſtians; I own I could never be tir'd with admiration and aſtoniſhment; his wondrous works always appear new to me; I ſee with wonder and delight, that the ſmalleſt of his works declare as loudly the glory of divine Majeſty as the greateſt, and that it was for us men that God created all things; and he never diſplays any proof of his power that is not likewiſe a teſtimony of his goodneſs; for his greatneſs and magnificence tells us the obligation we are under to love him with all our powers and faculties.

What reaſon, Sir, have we to rejoice that we have ſo many arguments to confirm us in what is both our duty and happineſs? for certainly the moſt ſolid and eſſential ſtep toward happineſs is to love God; and there are ſuch charms and

pleaſures

pleaſures in divine love, that none can be unhappy who are fully poſſeſs'd of it: for this reaſon, I don't know which ought moſt to excite our admiration, the goodneſs of God, or our own honour; for the moſt noble faculty of man is his capacity to love his maker; and, on the other hand, the greateſt work of God's goodneſs and favour to us, is, that he has continued to us after our fall the capacity of loving him to the greateſt exceſs, whereby we may expiate thoſe ſins which our frailty makes us commit.

Among mankind, thoſe of low fortune dare not preſume to love their ſuperiours in a friendly manner; they only reſpect them, and there ſeems to be as great a difference in their minds as fortunes; yet notwithſtanding the vaſt difference between God and us, we may love him with all our hearts, with all our ſouls, and with all our ſtrength; and it has always appear'd to me a ſtrange unnatural opinion, that ſome have conceived that we need only fear God, and that we are under no obligation to love him.

He is our Father, and we are his children, which are names of tenderneſs; he

gave his Son to die for us, and are we not obliged to love him for his goodneſs? how many other bleſſings has he confer'd on us? if we caſt our eyes either within or without us, we ſhall meet with nothing but the greateſt ſigns of love and tenderneſs, which require no return but our whole hearts; what can any body ſay to this that thinks we are only to fear God? what folly is it to fear him for ills that never did nor perhaps never will happen, and not to love him for the bleſſings we have already received.

I have given undeniable proofs that God tenderly cheriſhes us, which is the greateſt ſign of his love to us; and beſides we are the work of his hands; and there is no mechanick but what takes pleaſure in the work of his own hands, be it ever ſo indifferent; God then moſt certainly loves us, and we would return it with a ſervile fear; yet mankind, as wicked as they are, think they can make no return for love to their neighbour, but by loving him again.

When I conſider myſelf, I find a thouſand times leſs reaſon to remember that God is my Maſter, than that he is my moſt

moſt merciful Father: With pleaſure I repeat the name; the idea charms me; I am pleaſed to think I am a child of God; I bluſh with indignation when I meet with thoſe who would reduce me to the condition of a ſlave, by impoſing upon me a ſervile fear.

Love is the greateſt homage we can pay our Maker, and we are aſſur'd it is more pleaſing in his ſight than incenſe or perfumes: Our moſt noble manner of honouring him is to love him, and a heart inflam'd with divine love, is the moſt pleaſing oblation we can offer the Almighty; and I doubt not but that the Angels rejoice at ſuch ſacrifices, and we not only find our honour but our happineſs too in the love of God; for nothing can make us truly happy in this world but what will make us ſo in the next, which is love; 'tis the love of God, and being united to him, that makes the beatitude of the Saints, and that love is the only thing can make us happy here below.

Divine love, therefore, is a foretaſte of all the joys of heaven; it places us above the accidents of fortune; it teaches us to deſpiſe all the greatneſs and honours of the world,

world, when they come in competition with our duty to God; in fine, it fixes all our thoughts and desires upon that rock that can never fail us.

But I find I digress, if it can be call'd a digression when we are talking of pleasures, which are pure and innocent, to speak of the greatest a Christian mind can possibly be charm'd with: I should fear being ridicul'd by any other person for what I have said; but with you I always speak freely, and am not asham'd to tell you that the most sensible pleasure an honest man can feel, is a consciousness of true virtue and innocence, which not only proceeds from the honours and applause virtue gains among men, but from the just hopes it gives us of another life, and the peace it procures the soul in waiting for it; the pleasures of a good conscience are not to be equall'd by any thing this world affords; the impious and vicious carry a continual load of guilt about them, their pleasures are all false and superficial; but a virtuous man can never be thoroughly unhappy, he will always find a secret pleasure in his honour, probity, and religion.

I am very ſenſible his virtues ought not to raiſe his pride, but rather to humble him before God, to whom he is accountable for all theſe bleſſings; he is not to think himſelf juſtified by them, but to remember that where much is given much will be required, and that he has nothing but his ſins that he can call his own; but yet we may take pleaſure in our innocence, and the remembrance of good actions may fill us with love, thankfulneſs, and adoration of God, who is the ſole author of all good: In a word, nothing is ſo amiable, nothing ſo delightful and beautiful as virtue; and if the Heathens were greatly charm'd with it, Chriſtians have certainly ten thouſand times more reaſon to be ſo, becauſe we are aſſur'd of the true value of Chriſtian virtues; we are deliver'd from the doubtfulneſs and obſcurity that paganiſm was clouded with; we know that all Chriſtian virtues come from God, and center in him; whereas the Heathens thought all theirs center'd in themſelves, and therefore muſt conſequently be frail, miſerable, earthly, and imperfect.

But our virtues, being deriv'd from God, ſeem to partake of his divine nature; and being more noble and perfect than Heathen virtues, our pleaſures and happineſs encreaſe proportionably, and we are full of joy for being deliver'd from paganiſm, and the pride they abounded with.

I can't help repeating it again, that the pleaſures of virtue are inexpreſſiby great and noble: What a felicity is it to have all our actions govern'd by the rules of wiſdom and right reaſon, to unite all mankind to us by the bands of univerſal charity, to be unſhaken in proſperity or adverſe fortune, to carry in all our actions an air of ſweetneſs and moderation, to believe all God's promiſes, as much as if we ſaw them perform'd, to be full of hope, to love God and all mankind for his ſake, and to be always ready to relieve and pity the unhappy.

I think, ſays *Patru*, you do very well to place among your other pleaſures that of doing good; for it certainly is very delightful to a Chriſtian, to be a refuge for the poor to fly to, and to be the diſpenſer of God's bleſſings to thoſe in miſery: I have often wonder'd that there could be

be any thing in human nature ſo monſtrous as to delight in bloodſhed, tyranny, and oppreſſion; for my part, I can't bear to ſee the meaneſt creature ſuffer; and I never am concern'd at the lowneſs of my fortune, but when it hinders me from relieving the diſtreſs'd, as it too often does.

I envy not the great their honours or power, their delicacies or equipages, but I envy them their power of doing good; if they would give me my choice, and let me poſſeſs all their wealth, for no other end but to diſtribute it to others, I would gladly accept the bleſſing, and think myſelf very happy to be a depoſitary for the treaſures of the poor; for the greateſt pleaſure I can conceive is, to make others happy, and to behold thoſe one has made ſo. You know that by experience, ſays *D'Ablancourt*; you often taſte this pleaſure, and I have often obſerved a particular gaiety in your countenance for a whole day after you have done good to any perſon. I am not concern'd, ſays *Patru*, that you have obſerved this pleaſure in my countenance; but (continued he, with an air of exceeding modeſty) I am ſorry you

knew the cauſe of it; my little liberalities loſe their merit by being known. No, ſays *D'Ablancourt*, you are no loſer by it; for I never knew it from yourſelf, but from thoſe you had obliged; they always betray'd the ſecret, and ſome of them thought the only acknowledgment they could make, was publiſhing your favours; but I highly approve your delicacy in this particular; it is becoming a Gentleman and a Chriſtian, and therefore well becomes Mr. *Patru*. We ought as carefully to conceal our good actions as the Heathens publiſh'd theirs: God has commanded it, upon pain of loſing our reward if we diſobey, and we ought not to be content with the praiſes of men, when we can be eternally rewarded by God.

What you ſay, ſays *Patru*, is very juſt; and liberality ſeems ſo glorious an action, that God reſerves it for himſelf, and would not have it beheld by men, and he thereby does us the greateſt honour; for there is no man of ſenſe and delicacy but would rather be approv'd of by one man of merit, than to have the approbation of the people; how much more reaſon then have we to prefer being approv'd of by God

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than by the whole earth? for if there can be a pleaſure in the vain applauſes of men, who are often deceitful, unjuſt, or very ill judges of true merit, how much more pleaſing muſt it be to be applauded and rewarded by God, who is infinite goodneſs and wiſdom? and the pleaſure of having all our actions open to his all-ſeeing eye is ſo very great, that I wonder how avarice or oſtentation can tempt any to loſe his approbation.

The greateſt pleaſure, in my opinion, ſays *D'Ablancourt*, next to virtue and religion, is friendſhip; I was pleaſed with your bringing it into the character of your agreeable man of pleaſure; for, by deſcribing the delicacy of another, you have given us a taſte of your own.

Friendſhip is certainly a continual ſpring of pleaſures, the moſt uſeful and moſt deſirable of this world's bleſſings; we can't be truly ſaid to enjoy life without it: Can any thing be more agreeable than to have a friend, to whom we can freely open our hearts, and declare all our joys and pains to him as to ourſelves; even proſperity is inſipid without a friend to take part in it, who ſincerely intereſts himſelf in all our affairs;

fairs; and ill fortune would be often inſupportable, if we had not one to partake the burden with us. What a relief is it to complain to a friend, from whom we are ſure to receive pity and conſolation? to pour our tears into his boſom, before whom we may without conſtraint or ſhame own our misfortunes? the utmoſt wounds of fortune will ſoon heal when dreſs'd by ſuch a skilful hand.

Friendſhip is a ſure refuge in all times and places, in peace or war, at home or abroad; it is always agreeable, never troubleſome: What can be more ſweet and delightful than the conformity of humours, ſentiments, manners, and inclinations of two friends? If we can take pleaſure in ſeeing the lineaments of our face painted upon canvaſs with lifeleſs colours, what pleaſure muſt it be to ſee thoſe of the mind, our very heart and ſoul, in another ſelf?

We there ſee ourſelves much more faithfully and juſtly than in a looking-glaſs, which only ſhews the object that is juſt before it, while friendſhip always preſerves the image of the beloved object; however diſtant, the force of friendſhip unites them;

we

we live, we breathe but in our friend; we never can be ſaid to die while our friend lives, for we in ſome meaſure ſeem to live in him.

Friendſhip, indeed, has not the heat of love; but even that renders it more amiable and delightful, when two ſouls who were before united by a univerſal charity, unite themſelves more firmly by a conformity in virtue, and all things both divine and human: Such a union of hearts and wills produces the moſt exquiſite delights; the benefit of theſe commerces is very conſiderable; but it is not that which makes the pleaſure of friendſhip; it is the harmony of minds, benevolence, and the conjunction of hearts, which creates this pleaſure; all the good offices we receive are doubly agreeable from a ſincere friend, becauſe we take them as proofs of his affection.

I am certain to the laſt moment of my life, I ſhall be ſenſible of ſo innocent, ſo ſweet a delight; a delight ſo agreeable to the nature of mankind, I mean to the worthy part of it; for thoſe who are without virtue or merit, have not ſouls capable of this pleaſure. I often in my retire-

ment call to my remembrance the vaſt ſatisfaction and complacency I uſed to take in the converſation of two or three particular friends; and I always think the reliſh I have for friendſhip is the greateſt felicity nature ever beſtow'd on me, and your friendſhip the moſt valuable preſent I ever receiv'd from fortune.

Though I have endeavour'd by reaſon and religion to cure myſelf of vain glory, yet I can hardly ſuppreſs a ſecret deſire I have always had to have our friendſhip placed among the ſmall number of celebrated ones that hiſtory has recorded: I ſubmit entirely to God's will; but it is certain, that the ſtrongeſt attachment I have to this world, and the only loſs I ſhall regret when I leave it, and is, will be my friends; and yet I ſhall be well enough contented to leave you behind me, for I would not ſurvive you if I could chuſe for myſelf, becauſe that would be dying many times, inſtead of once for all.

For my part, I often wonder how it happens that there is ſo little friendſhip in the world; for moſt ſocieties are founded upon intereſt or pleaſure, and when the ends are ſerv'd the friendſhip ceaſes; the only

only reaſon I can give for this is ſelf-love, which, in my opinion, is very blind to its own intereſts; for what ſolid pleaſures can we take in the converſation of thoſe we are ready to hate upon the moſt trifling occaſion; thoſe commerces can never be agreeable where the heart has no part: Without confidence and friendſhip every thing grows diſagreeable; whereas when we love, every thing gives us pleaſure, and all our diverſions are heighten'd by a mutual friendſhip, and become more pure and delightful; ſo that if we would ſtudy the true happineſs of life, inſtead of loving only ourſelves, which is the preſent cuſtom, we ſhould love all we conſtantly convers'd with.

What vaſtly increaſes the value of friendſhip is, that our Saviour has authoriz'd it by his example, and commanded it by his precepts: There is nothing he has ſo ſtrictly enjoin'd us, as the love of our neighbour; this general love and benevolence in our minds towards mankind, produces friendſhip when we meet with a perſon of our own taſte and ſentiments; and if this had been the only pleaſure God allow'd us, we might be extreamly well contented with the privation of all others. But

But I now deſcend to leſs noble, but very agreeable and innocent pleaſures, which are the amuſements of the mind, and the exerciſe of arts and ſciences; it certainly is no inconſiderable pleaſure to be able to defend the poor and unfortunate, to make a harden'd ſoul become penitent, to bring thoſe into the right way who had wander'd out of it, into error or libertiniſm, to diſpoſe the minds of our hearers as we pleaſe, and by our eloquence to ſeem as if we only had the true uſe of ſpeech: The whole world is certainly not born for great actions; every body is not a *Cicero*, a *Chryſoſtome*, or a *Patru*, but we may endeavour to approach as near as we can to them, and the ſtudy of leſs exalted arts is not without its pleaſures.

What delight did *Boiſſet* and *Lovigi* take in compoſing their muſick? We may in ſome meaſure judge of it by the pleaſure we take in hearing it; we ſee *Le Brun* and *Mignard* ſpend whole days and nights in working at their pictures, which is ſo great a pleaſure to them, that you can hardly ever take the pencil out of their hands; but there are none ſo well pleaſed with their own works as the poets; they,

they, if they would excel, muſt have all the different talents of the painter and muſician united in them; and, to ſay the truth, verſe runs with ſo much eaſe and ſweetneſs from the mind, that the pleaſure it inſpires can only be imagined by thoſe who feel it: How was *Malherbe* delighted with his odes that he addreſs'd to *Henry* IV.? What pleaſure did *Moliere* take in his *Ecole des femmes*, his *Precieuſe*, but above all in his *Tartuffe?* the ſuppreſſion of which ſhew'd the number of hypocrites, and the occaſion there was for ſuch a ſatire: As for *Corneille*, we can't believe he could be moderately pleaſed with his *Cid*, his *Cinna*, and his *Horace;* this man, beſides a ſuperiour brightneſs of wit, muſt have a prodigious greatneſs of ſoul, to be capable of thinking and ſpeaking in ſo noble a manner: When we read his deſcriptions of the heroes of ancient *Rome*, we can hardly believe but that he liv'd in the days of the *Fabricii* and the *Scipio*'s; and that he inſpired them with all their virtues: when we conſider the vaſt difference between the modern *Romans* and the ancient ones, who ſtill live in his works, we think he may juſtly

ly ſay of himſelf that excellent line of *Sertorius*;

Rome's *no longer in* Rome, *ſhe's where-ever I dwell.*

You judge very rightly, ſays *Patru*, *Corneille* is an excellent poet, his genius is equal to the *Roman* virtue; but there is a young man now coming into the world, who in all appearance will one day equal him, which we cou'd hardly hope from the genius of our nation, nor even from human wit; but if one may judge by what I have ſeen of his, he will have the character of politeneſs, delicacy and tenderneſs.

We have reaſon to wiſh, for the honour of our countrey, that after *Corneille*'s repreſenting to us the imperious virtues of the *Romans*, there might ariſe another great poet, who in a more elegant ſtile, and greater ſmoothneſs of numbers, might repreſent to us the humanity, ſweetneſs and affability of the *Greeks*; that by blending them together, we might arrive at the higheſt pitch of perfection.

But

But it is not only the honour and advantage of theſe works that give the authors ſo much pleaſure, 'tis the compoſure, the exerciſe of the talent, the labour that produces the pleaſure I ſpeak of; I don't know whether you found it in your pleadings, but I can't expreſs to you the pleaſure I felt in tranſlating *Tacitus*, *Minutius Felix*, but particularly *Lucian*, which is my favourite work: I found the ſweeteſt reward, and fruit of my labour, in the work itſelf, abſtracted from all other conſiderations, but the pleaſure of the employment: in fine, if a man has a genius and taſte for ſtudy and fine learning, he can never live unhappily; how ſwiftly the time paſſes when we fill up every moment that we can ſpare from the duties of a civil or Chriſtian life, with writing, reading, converſation, or contemplation? for when we ſo employ our time, it is a vaſt pleaſure ſometimes to look into ourſelves, to examine all our thoughts, words and actions, to give ourſelves a reaſon for all we have ſaid or done, to obſerve all we have ſeen and heard; theſe reflections are not leſs uſeful than agreeable, they are very conformable to our nature and reaſon; for to ſpeak properly, to live is to think.

I ſay little upon this head; for we now live in an age wherein people are ſo incapable of recollection, and ſo unfit for it, that they can't bear to be a moment alone; and this diſpoſition is the cauſe of their making ſo great a jeſt of private meditation: and however wiſe and reaſonable it may be, the generality of the world look upon the ſoliloquies and meditations of religious people only as extravagant fooliſh viſions, cauſed by melancholy.

I have now, Sir, given you a detail of innocent pleaſures, pleaſures that are friends to reaſon and virtue, and which are not only allowed, but ſome of them are even commanded by religion; and as for thoſe which appear more dangerous, I have already prov'd that there is a method of enjoying them innocently, which plainly ſhews that it is not pleaſure in itſelf which is to be condemned, but only the abuſe of it.

For we muſt lay it down as a fundamental rule, that we are to be ſtrictly temperate; temperance muſt be the predominant virtue that governs all our actions: I wonder how we can ever abandon it, for ſetting religion aſide, I ſhould think our own intereſt and natural reaſon would

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teach us moderation, for certainly infinite are the misfortunes that intemperance cauſes: Debauches are ſoon or late hated and deſpiſed by the whole world; what ſober perſon can behold without horror a man always buried in wine, and languiſhing in voluptuouſneſs? they utterly extinguiſh the brightneſs of their wit, they ſtifle that divine ſpark in them that ſhould enlighten their minds, and they thereby become ſlaves to the body; in a word, they ceaſe to be men, which is the greateſt unhappineſs can poſſibly befall them; beſides all this, we have before obſerved the loſs of wealth and reputation, and often the loſs of life, the neglect of their affairs both ſpiritual and temporal, the trouble and deſpair it often cauſes; theſe are the natural and almoſt inſeparable fruits of debauchery, ſo that if we have but a moderate regard for our own happineſs, one would imagine we ſhould naturally fly from ſo many ills.

Indeed, ſays *Patru*, this may fully convince us that Chriſtianity is not only of a divine nature, but perfectly ſuited to right reaſon; for who in his right ſenſes would purchaſe debauchery at ſo dear a rate? It

is very true, ſays *D'Ablancourt*; one can hardly ſay whether the voluptuous have moſt folly or irreligion, for they would reliſh pleaſures the better for moderation: whereas exceſs of pleaſures, like that of joy or grief, is never truly felt, becauſe they overcharge the mind, and the ſoul likes only to be lightly touch'd; violent tranſports diſcompoſe it, and put it in too great an agitation; wines and meat loſe their reliſh when taken to exceſs, ſo that if we would be wiſely voluptuous, we ſhould leave ourſelves the uſe of reaſon enough to be ſenſible of our pleaſures; for reaſon never hurts any thing, it gives life and ſpirit to pleaſures, and makes us taſte them with the greateſt delicacy; whereas drunken ſots never know what happineſs or pleaſure is.

But theſe are not the arguments that ought to make us abſtain from voluptuouſneſs; we have a much better incentive to temperance; God has commanded it, and we cannot be voluptuous without ſinning againſt our Maker, and thereby deſtroying ſoul and body.

But we are not to enjoy moderate pleaſures always, we are ſometimes to deny ourſelves

ſelves the uſe of any the moſt innocent pleaſures; for a full and conſtant enjoyment of them dulls the appetite, takes off the ſweetneſs, and begets ſatiety; ſo that we ſhould have ſome intervals, to make us return with a greater reliſh to the enjoyment of pleaſures. But there is a much better reaſon than all this for abſtinence, for there is a ſort of intemperance in a conſtant and habitual uſe of the ſlighteſt and moſt innocent pleaſures; 'tis making that the buſineſs of our lives, which ought only to be an amuſement, and ſhould be uſed (as we do ſleep and the other neceſſities of life) purely for a relief to nature; neither do I think we ſhould ſearch after any the moſt moderate pleaſures, but content ourſelves with ſuch as nature preſents to us; we are not to alter the ſeaſons, tho' it be only for flowers or herbs; we may innocently indulge ourſelves with the ſmell of roſes in *April*, but it would be too great a delicacy to deſire them in *December*; beſides, our violent deſires are generally unſucceſsful, for pleaſure ſeems to fly the hand that courts it with too much eagerneſs: And may we not likewiſe ſay, ſays *Patru*, that we ſhould not ſhew too much

avidity in the very enjoyment of pleaſures? we need not be ſtupid, but there are ſome people ſo violently tranſported with pleaſure, that we read the tranſport in their eyes, they are quite overcome with joy; now this eager attachment ſhews a little too much ſenſuality, 'tis enough to lend ourſelves to pleaſure, without giving ourſelves up entirely to it.

But this eagerneſs, replied *D' Ablancourt*, often proceeds from conſtitution; ſome peoples paſſions are much more violent than others; ſome are violently affected with every thing; and when this is the caſe, it is judging too nicely to condemn them for what is only the effect of their natural temper.

But I think whatever our conſtitution is, we ſhould always be ready to part with the greateſt pleaſures without uneaſineſs, when the good of our neighbour, decency, or other reaſons require it. This perfect reſignation is of great advantage to us, it takes off all anxiety for the future, and gives us a perfect tranquillity, which is no ſmall degree of happineſs; and the beſt method to make us always reliſh pleaſures, is to be conſtantly prepared to part with them.

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When pleaſures are thus purified, and confined within the bounds of reaſon and moderation, they are not only free from vice, but in my opinion they render virtue more amiable; for the generality of monaſticks, and thoſe who quit ſociety and the innocent enjoyments of life, and live retired, are certainly very religious good people, but they generally contract in their ſolitude a ſort of peeviſhneſs; they preſently take fire, they grow by degrees into ruſticity, and loſe entirely their ſweetneſs of temper, without which the beſt qualities become hateful or diſagreeable; and this moroſeneſs of temper makes piety ſo much deſpis'd, by people who judge only by outward appearances: now a little commerce with the world, and a few innocent diverſions would prevent this; for pleaſures ſweeten the moſt ſavage tempers, and generally produce that ſerenity and ſweetneſs of temper that charms the world: we learn humanity, affability and good nature in the converſation of agreeable people, and when piety is adorn'd with theſe graces, it certainly makes a greater impreſſion upon the minds of others, and would make a great-

er progreſs in the world, than when it is attended with ſeverity and ruſticity. The world is at preſent ſuch that it will not follow virtue, unleſs ſhe has a very fair outſide; ſhe muſt be adorn'd to make her agreeable, and we ſhould a little comply with its weakneſs. We ſhould have ſo great a value for piety, to do all we can to make it appear amiable to others; we may convince the world that it is not incompatible with pleaſures, and that the joy innocent pleaſures give, does not ill become the face of a Chriſtian, and will do no injury to his conſcience. What you have ſaid, ſays *Patru*, is very right, but there are many in the world, who think pleaſures ſo limited don't deſerve the name, or are at beſt but very ſlight inſipid pleaſures.

There are people in the world, ſays *D'Ablancourt*, who think wine inſipid, and muſt have brandy and ſuch liquors to ſupport their ſpirits; the people you mention are of this ſort, they think nothing agreeable but what is forbidden, but as for the reſt of the world, I think I have ſaid enough to make them in love with religion, and have ſhewn that there are

pleaſures

pleaſures enough in Chriſtianity to ſoften the cares of life, and to comfort and cheer our minds in our greateſt troubles; they are not indeed allowed in debauchery, neither do they deſire it; they are ſatisfied with leſs violent pleaſures, and are much more delighted to have their minds ſweetly amuſed than violently agitated; thoſe who bathe in a little brook have not ſo much water as if they bathed in a river, or in the ſea, yet they are agreeably refreſh'd, and are in no danger of drowning, to which thoſe who bathe in rivers may be expoſed.

Good Chriſtians have not the pleaſures of the wicked and debauched; but are private perſons unhappy for not having the ſame diverſions as kings? No certainly, no wiſe man will deſire any thing out of his reach, and forbidden pleaſures are certainly no more to be deſired by Chriſtians.

A wiſe man thinks himſelf happy in being poſitively forbid the uſe of dangerous pleaſures; he is pleas'd with his impotency and incapacity to offend God; beſides, criminal pleaſures are unknown to Chriſtians, therefore they are not ſenſible of the

pain of privation. Are we in *France* afflicted for not having the ſame diverſions, or the ſame fruits the *Chineſe* have? A good Chriſtian has no more deſire for immoderate pleaſures, than for pleaſures that are not in nature, for they are not ſo in reſpect to him, and conſequently he does not wiſh for them, and it is no pain to be debarr'd from what we don't deſire the uſe of.

And after all, it is not the abundance or greatneſs of pleaſures that create happineſs, but it is the peaceable enjoyment of thoſe nature liberally beſtows upon us; when all is ſerene within, when we feel no guilt or remorſe for paſt actions, 'tis then we are truly happy, and have no reaſon to complain. But, ſays *Patru*, it is not ſo very eaſy to follow theſe rules, and to obſerve this moderation: —— and pray, ſays *D'Ablancourt*, what great difficulty is there in it? a very moderate uſe of reaſon, eſpecially when 'tis animated by Chriſtianity, will enable us to perform this difficult task; the terrible effects of debauchery are enough to make us tremble, therefore what great armour do we ſtand in need of, to defend ourſelves againſt it? unleſs we have

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loſt our ſenſes, we ſure may eaſily avoid this dangerous precipice, however cover'd with flowers; nay, in my opinion it is much eaſier to retrench our pleaſures, than to endure all thoſe ills that certainly attend debauchery; we ſee people every day deny themſelves pleaſures for the ſake of health, others almoſt ſtarve themſelves to preſerve a fine ſhape; what pains, what abſtinences and fatigues do men undergo, to make themſelves renowned in war? and how eaſy does hypocriſy often render the greateſt auſterities?

Why then can't we do that for God, which others do for health or renown, for intereſt or the preſervation of frail beauty! can't a ſincere piety do as great things as a feign'd one? for hypocriſy only wants the ſincerity of the heart to make it a real virtue; we may therefore be aſſured, that our impotence does not proceed from ourſelves, nor the nature of pleaſures, which are eaſily diſciplin'd, but the fault lies entirely in our wills, we are not inclined to give ourſelves the leaſt trouble, we forget that we are Chriſtians; for if we once reflected on it, that conſideration would be the greateſt ſupport and defence againſt

debauchery and voluptuouſneſs; if we in all our actions would remember we are Chriſtians, and would conſider what our religion requires of us, we ſhould no more do any thing unworthy of us, than a wiſe prince would act like a porter; but alas, there are but few of us who know the true rules of Chriſtianity, and there is as much occaſion to ſend miſſionaries round *Europe*, to inſtruct Chriſtians in their duty, as there is to convert and inſtruct infidels.

I would not, by what I have ſaid in the defence of pleaſures, be underſtood as if I thought our happineſs conſiſted in them; we can never be perfectly happy in this world, virtue itſelf can't make us ſo; what reaſon have we to expect our happineſs here, when our eyes are conſtantly fix'd on heaven, and ſeem to expect more than this earth can yield us? can our happineſs conſiſt in pleaſures that vaniſh in a moment, pleaſures that are frail, ſuperficial and uncertain? No object can create happineſs, but what has ſome degree of equal excellence with the perſon that enjoys it; now the whole world does not afford any thing but what is infinitely inferior to man,

therefore

therefore nothing but a ſovereign good ought to take poſſeſſion of his heart; for daily experience teaches us that the ſhort tranſient pleaſures of this life, that vaniſh in the moment we hope to enjoy them, can never long ſatisfy the deſires of our heart; therefore we muſt be obliged to acknowledge that nothing deſerves our eſteem, but what can never be taken from us; now GOD created us for himſelf, and he alone can make us happy; all our repoſe and bliſs conſiſts in our being eternally united to him, for he alone will eternally ſatisfy all our deſires, and what a prodigious honour is it for us to aſpire to our Maker? people don't conſider this felicity enough, but for my part nothing ſo highly raiſes my delight and wonder: And in my opinion we are more obliged to God for making himſelf the object of our happineſs, than for having prepared us an eternal happineſs. We muſt leave this world to find our ſovereign good; the wounds of Jeſus Chriſt have open'd to us the ſource of our felicity, and as he by his death has called us to happineſs, it is only by our death that we can arrive at it; for were all the happineſs and pleaſures of

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this life center'd in one man, he would not be perfectly happy nor ſatisfied; but though pleaſures will not make us happy, yet it does not follow that they are criminal; for tho' we are not to look upon them as our ſole good, yet we may enjoy them as an amuſement, or an allay to our misfortunes; for ſuch is the wretched condition of our nature, that we ſtand too much in need of theſe little alleviations; we are ſurrounded with a thouſand ills, all things conſpire to make us miſerable, no man is pleaſed with his preſent ſtate, and what is worſt of all, no man has reaſon to be ſo; for even our pleaſures are very imperfect, as I have obſerved, and always have ſomething bitter in them that corrupts our happineſs. The greateſt mirth is always ſucceeded by melancholy, and numberleſs are the troubles and mortifications we undergo in the courſe of our lives, beſides war and other ſcourges that afflict mankind in general. How many miſeries is every particular perſon ſubject to? Poverty, ſickneſs, loſs of our deareſt friends or reputation: Every condition, every age and ſex has its peculiar misfortunes, none are exempt from trouble from

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the cradle to the throne; and we are often ſo overwhelm'd with afflictions, that the grave is the only refuge, the only good we wiſh for.

Now if in all theſe miſeries we ſeek for ſome little allay, if we make uſe of the pleaſures of life to enable us more chearfully to undergo our daily ſufferings? Can we be blamed for this? Is it a ſin to prevent deſpair, and to ſhew ſome little compaſſion to ourſelves? This would be great rigour; and God has given us ſuch infinite proofs of his mercy, that we can never imagine this can offend him: He has himſelf declared in Scripture, that man is weak, and he has conſtantly had compaſſion on his weakneſs: After the deluge he allowed us the uſe of meats, inſtead of the pulſe and fruits that our forefathers lived on; and in compaſſion to the *Iſraelites*, when they were tired with manna, he rained quails from heaven; therefore we may eaſily judge, by God's government of the world, that there is no crime in innocent pleaſures; for obſerve here in *France* there are ten times more men than could poſſibly be employed in cultivating the earth, and yet they muſt all ſubſiſt; ſome

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you ſee apply themſelves to painting, others to muſick, architecture, and other arts which are not of abſolute neceſſity, but only contribute to the eaſe and pleaſure of life; and by theſe arts many get a good livelihood that muſt otherwiſe periſh with hunger: Now if it is lawful to apply ourſelves to theſe arts, it is doubtleſs likewiſe lawful to enjoy the fruits of them, for they would otherwiſe be entirely uſeleſs.

How many live by working of ſilk, which ſeems perfectly ſuperfluous; it paſſes thro' the hands of above twenty ſorts of workmen (who all get their bread by it) before it is wove into thoſe fine ſilks that adorn men and women, and even our very altars.

And this is a prodigious proof of God's goodneſs to us, thus to multiply our wants, and by that means to make our money circulate thro' ſo many different hands, and to make it paſs from the rich to the poor, which reduces all mankind to a ſort of equality, tho' we don't obſerve it; for even kings, who appear with ſuch vaſt pomp and magnificence, have nothing of all you ſee for their own uſe, but food and raiment (which the poor likewiſe enjoy;)

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all the reſt is only for others; their equipage, their fleets and armies, their pleaſures and paſſions, are only properly for the maintenance of an infinite number of people: This may ſeem a little dark to you, but I can't help thinking it true, if we examine things to the bottom.

In ſome countries they have no way of employing themſelves, but in thoſe arts that only contribute to their pleaſures: In *Holland*, for example, they have neither corn nor wine but what other nations ſupply them with; ſo that it is impoſſible for them to ſubſiſt without thoſe arts, and God certainly deſign'd they ſhould live as well as we.

Provence does not yield one quarter of corn enough for its inhabitants; but by their ſelling to ſtrangers their citrons, their eſſences, and orange-flowers, their fruits and liquors, which are only to pleaſe the ſmell and taſte, they thereby get money to buy bread, and live in great plenty.

Now if it was a crime for ſtrangers to croſs the ſeas in ſearch of ſuch trifles; if they were ſo ſcrupulous as not to buy any thing that might contribute to luxury, the

poor

poor *Provenzales* muſt of neceſſity be reduced to ſtarving; they would have nothing to feed on but their figs and grapes, which yield no ſolid nutriment; and one of the fineſt provinces in the kingdom would by this means ſoon be turn'd into a deſart.

You may now plainly conceive the abſurdities and inconveniences that would attend ſuch ſevere morals as our preacher taught us; but God, who is more wiſe, is likewiſe more merciful, has given different things to different lands, that we might have a commerce with one another, and that every one might buy of his neighbour what he had not of his own, and that we might all have what was neceſſary as well as delightful; and to make this commerce the eaſier carried on, God has placed great rivers in every country, and has ſo diſpos'd the ſea, that after having encompaſs'd the earth, it winds in a thouſand different arms, and flows into all the nations of the world.

All this was ſo wonderfully order'd to unite men together, and to make the world ſeem but as one family, united by the bands of univerſal charity, or that the

wants we have of one another's aid ſhould do that which charity obliges us to. Thus do men obey this hidden law of God, without knowing it; they travel into all parts, and aſſiſt one another in the common calamities of life; and however different in manners, languages, or religion, all unite in a reciprocal commerce.

Now I think your preacher, and all who reſemble him, either in your religion or mine, ſhould enter into theſe conſiderations, and not condemn all pleaſures as criminal.

Beſides, ſince this ſevere doctrine is very unſucceſsful, and that the generality of mankind will never be prevail'd upon to turn hermits, would it not be much more for the advantage of religion, to be leſs ſevere upon thoſe pleaſures which are not in themſelves forbidden? but only to prove how they are abus'd; for if men once found they might be religious, and at the ſame time enjoy the innocent pleaſures of life, they would be aſham'd to paſs thoſe reaſonable bounds, and to give themſelves up to voluptuouſneſs and debauchery; whereas now finding themſelves forbid all manner of pleaſures, and knowing they

cannot ſupport life agreeably without them, they give themſelves up to all, without conſidering which are moſt guilty or innocent.

Therefore, Sir, let us not confound theſe ideas, but let us diſtinguiſh pleaſure from debauchery; let us ſeparate the abuſe from a modeſt uſe of pleaſures, and let us not confound the common ſtate with the ſtate of perfection, nor a man who lives in the world with a recluſe; let us carefully diſtinguiſh between thoſe pleaſures we only take to ſweeten the cares of life, and thoſe wherein the luxurious continually indulge; let us make a difference between ſenſuality and what neceſſity obliges us to allow to the weakneſs of human nature.

By theſe prudent diſtinctions we may perceive what pleaſures are innocent or not ſo; and we may, without dread or guilt, enjoy thoſe bleſſings God ordain'd for our uſe and relief, becauſe we ſhall be aſſur'd we keep within the bounds God has preſcrib'd us.

This life, 'tis certain, is but a paſſage to the next; and if a traveller, inſtead of going to the place he deſign'd, ſhould ſtay in the firſt agreeable town he came into,

for fear of meeting with rocky or dangerous ways, we ſhould juſtly think him a fool or madman; and I don't know whether he may be very wiſe or praiſe-worthy, that goes out of his way in ſearch of quickſands and precipices, when he might go on in an eaſy direct road; but certainly none can be blam'd for entertaining themſelves with the agreeable proſpects they meet with in the way; and provided they don't go out of their road, they may certainly now and then ſtop to refreſh themſelves, and recover their ſpirits, to enable them to continue their journey; yet tho' they may enjoy the pleaſures that offer themſelves, they are not to ſhun the rocks or dangerous paths that lie directly in the road.

Thus I think we ought to act in this life; let us chearfully accept of both the good and ill God is pleaſed to ſend us; let us endure the one with patience and reſignation, and enjoy the other with gratitude and prudence; let us do all the good we can; let us love God above all things, and our neighbour as ourſelves; let us cheriſh and aſſiſt the unfortunate; let us walk uprightly, and then let us not trouble

ourſelves about thoſe who would deny us the uſe of the moſt innocent pleaſures.

So many bleſſings were neither given us for our deſtruction, nor to be uſeleſs to us; our reaſon and religion will direct us where to ſtop in the enjoyment of pleaſures, and even how to render ourſelves more agreeable to God by a grateful acknowledgment and moderate uſe of his bleſſings; for certainly God is as well pleaſed with the gratitude and temperance as with the other virtues of mankind; yet I own, that with all our moderation and piety the beſt of us have reaſon to dread the divine juſtice; we cannot be entirely juſtified in God's ſight, but he is good, and full of compaſſion and long-ſuffering; and we ſhall always have Jeſus Chriſt for a mediator between God and us.

You have made an excellent diſcourſe, ſays *Patru* ſmiling; but I concluded you would conduct your traveller to glory: To be ſerious, I muſt own you have either converted or perverted me, I don't know which; for you have almoſt perſuaded me to think there is no harm in love or plays, which two pleaſures I always

ways thought very dangerous ones; but I now begin to believe with you, that the ſtate of perfection is indeed the beſt, but that in the common ſtate we may without a crime take the pleaſures nature offers us, provided we don't fix our minds upon them, or uſe them beyond what Chriſtianity allows.

I have but one ſcruple remaining, which is, that I don't know whether I have not heard you with too great a pleaſure for me to enjoy a ſafe conſcience.

FINIS.

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